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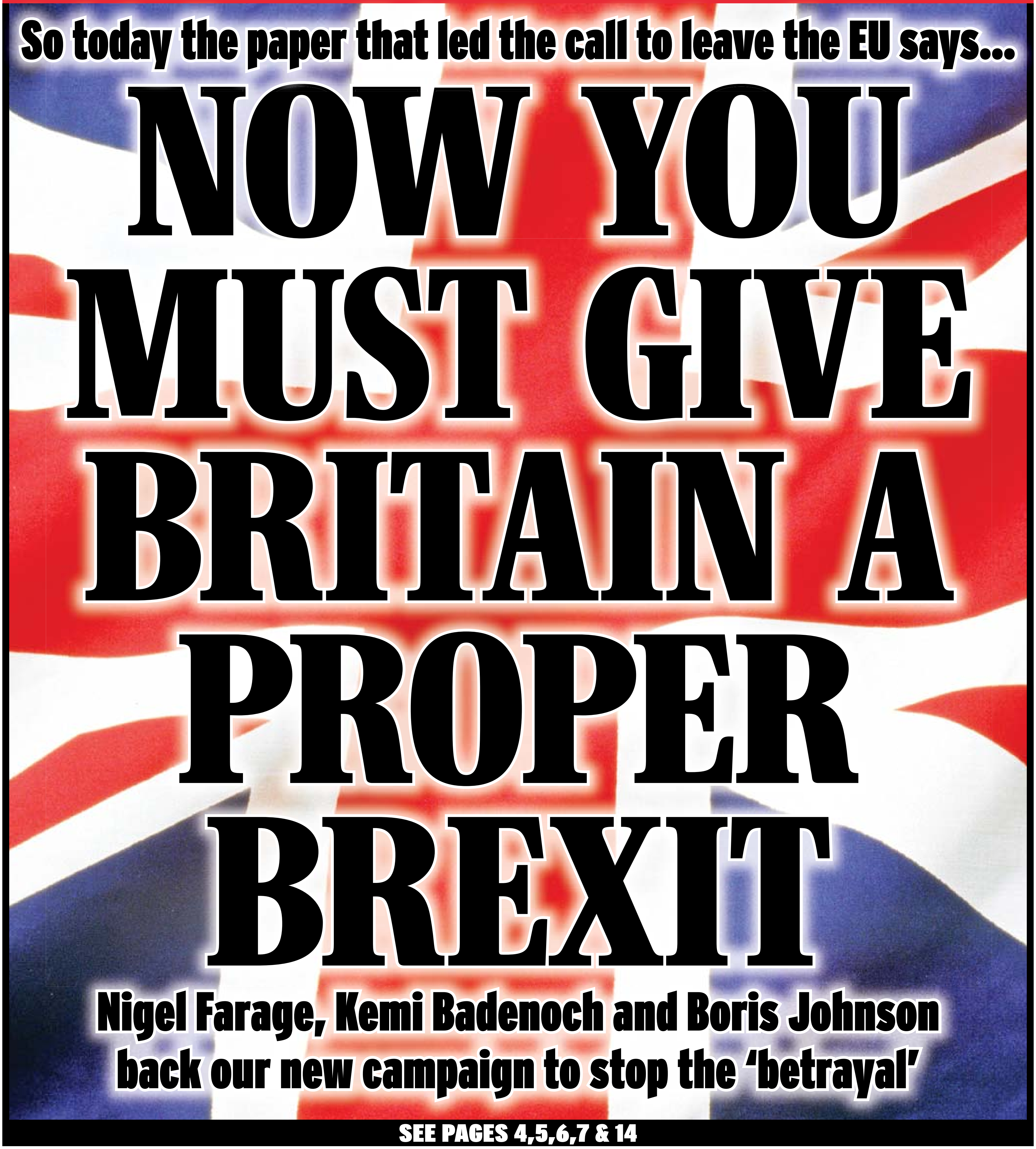
NEARLY 10 YEARS ON AND WE ARE STILL WAITING!



So today the paper that led the call to leave the EU says...

NOW YOU MUST GIVE BRITAIN A PROPER BREXIT

Nigel Farage, Kemi Badenoch and Boris Johnson back our new campaign to stop the 'betrayal'

SEE PAGES 4,5,6,7 & 14

Clubcard Prices

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4 Salmon Fillets

Clubcard Price

per pot
89
calories
Nestlé
Aero
milk
chocolate
feel the bubbles melt

£2

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THE
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Tesco Boneless Salmon Fillets 4 Pack: Clubcard price £14.42/kg, regular price £16.83/kg, ends 10/03. Aero Chocolate Mousse 4 x 59g: Clubcard price 53p/100g, regular price 85p/100g; Nestle Milkybar Mousse 4 x 55g: Clubcard price 57p/100g, regular price 91p/100g ends 08/02. Pukka The Big One All Steak Pie: Clubcard price £3/each, regular price £4.50/each, ends 08/02. Goodfella's Stonebaked Thin Pepperoni Pizza 332g: Clubcard price 53p/100g, regular price 90p/100g, ends 09/02. Available in the majority of larger stores and online. Excludes Express, Isle of Man and Whoosh. Clubcard/app required. Delivery charges and some exclusions may apply.

Picture: AARON CHOWN/PA

Farewell to jolly Jilly

BY **EMILY FERGUSON**

THE Queen led celebrations of the life of her friend Dame Jilly Cooper at a memorial service for the bestselling author yesterday.

Camilla's ex-husband Andrew Parker Bowles, who helped inspire Dame Jilly's best-loved character Rupert Campbell-Black, joined a host of famous faces at Southwark Cathedral for the event.

The author died aged 88 in October after a fall and her funeral took place last year, but yesterday the stars came out to toast the writer's "champagne soul".

They included Alex Hassell, who played Rupert in the Disney+ series Rivals based on Dame Jilly's novel of that name, alongside co-stars Aidan Turner, Danny Dyer and Katherine Parkinson.

Naughty

Camilla set the tone in royal blue, a theme picked up by TV royalty Joanna Lumley and Clare Balding, while screen legends Derek Jacobi and Rupert Everett took a leaf out of Dyer's book with baby pink neckwear.

Dame Jilly's literary agent Felicity Blunt said it all with a tote bag bearing the legend "I love Jilly Cooper". Felicity's husband, the actor Stanley Tucci, said of Dame Jilly: "She was an extraordinary person, a brilliant writer, nice person and naughty."

Dean of Southwark Mark Oakley said in the service: "Dame Jilly Cooper was a person with a champagne soul, of good vintage and sparkling for all its worth.

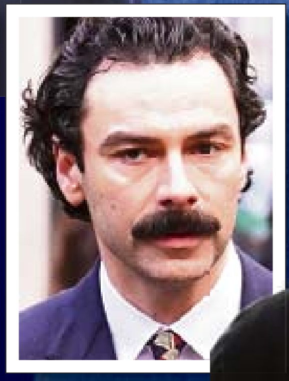
"She lit up places and people, a collage of rare humane qualities."

Dame Joanna Lumley said afterwards that the service was "very touching, sometimes very funny...[it] just reminded you of how hugely she's being missed."

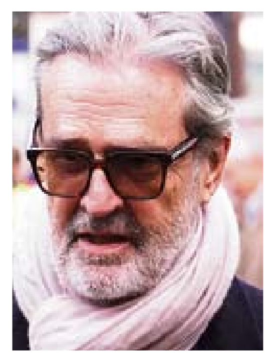
Camilla was a friend of Dame Jilly, above, who died last year. Below, her agent says it all with a bag

I ♥ JILLY COOPER

Joanna Lumley and Clare Balding follow the lead in blue



Rivals stars Alex Hasssell, Aidan Turner and Katherine Parkinson arrive for the service



Derek Jacobi and Rupert Everett opt for pink neckwear like Danny Dyer, right

HEAVYWEIGHTS BACK

Give us the Brexit

BY **STEPH SPYRO, CHRISTIAN CALGIE** and **MARTYN BROWN**

PATRIOTIC heavyweights are backing a Daily Express campaign demanding Sir Keir Starmer "Gives Us a Proper Brexit" in the run-up to the 10th anniversary of the 2016 referendum.

Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson, Kemi Badenoch and Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg say Labour is failing to capitalise on Britain's liberation from the EU six years ago.

Reform UK leader Mr Farage declared "betrayal has followed betrayal" despite 17.4 million people voting to quit the Bloc.

He said: "The many benefits of our hard-fought Brexit freedoms are still there to be seized – yet bafflingly Labour shows every sign of wanting to drag us back under the heel of Brussels.

"Are they completely mad? The truth is this Labour government is hellbent on blaming all the country's current travails on Brexit simply to mask their own incompetence."

The Express crusade demands Britain leaves the European Convention on Human Rights – so often abused by migrants resisting deportation. We are also calling for the red tape hobbling businesses to be slashed and a 12-mile exclusion zone around the UK for British vessels only.

EXPRESS CRUSADE
GIVE US A PROPER BREXIT

Former Prime Minister Mr Johnson said Express readers helped "finally deliver Brexit" on January 31, 2020. This newspaper became the first in 2010 to declare Britain must leave the EU.

He said: "This country took back control of its laws, its borders and huge sums of money we were sending to Brussels.

"Within less than a year, Brexit proved its worth as our regulatory freedom allowed the UK to vaccinate its population faster than any other European country.

"That meant we came out of Covid lockdowns faster and had a faster economy rebound than any country in the G7. Brexit immediately paid off – saving lives and saving jobs."

But Mr Johnson, who won the 2019 general election for the Tories on the promise to "get Brexit done", said: "The UK is now groaning under the economic misery of a high-tax, high-regulation, high-unemployment Labour government. To make matters worse, the Starmer government is keeping us in lockstep with the sclerotic EU economy. Labour is failing to take advantage of Brexit. By slowly taking us back into the orbit of Brussels the Starmer government is destroying Brexit.

"They are destroying the UK's potential to do things differently and better. It is time to stand up for our hard-won democratic freedoms and Save Brexit from Starmer."

Our crusade launches as the Prime Minister keeps pushing for tighter post-Brexit economic relations with the bloc. This week he said he wanted to "go further" in moving Britain closer to the EU single market. Labour's election manifesto pledged not to rejoin the EU single market or customs union.

Speaking to reporters en-route to China, Sir Keir trumpeted an agreement that cuts red tape on food traded between the UK and EU.

He said: "We should not just follow through on what we've already agreed. The relationship with the EU and every summit should be iterative. We should be seeking to go further. There are other areas in the single market where we should look to see whether we can make more progress."

Europe minister Nick Thomas-Symonds and Business Secretary Peter Kyle will hold talks about EU alignment with their European counterparts on Tuesday.

It comes before the next UK-EU summit, expected in May. Joining the single market would eliminate trade tariffs between Britain and the bloc but Westminster would have to follow rules set by Brussels and accept free movement of people. Tory leader Kemi Badenoch said: "We have the opportunity to make Britain more competitive than Europe, to use the very best of British education, engineering and enterprise to attract investment and ensure we have a strong economy and more, better-paid jobs.

"But under Labour unemploy-

OUR THREE KEY DEMANDS

THE Daily Express's Give Us a Proper Brexit campaign is demanding:

CONTROLLED IMMIGRATION

Migration has reached unprecedented levels with tens of thousands crossing the Channel in small boats while human rights lawyers backed by the European Court of Human Rights frustrate deportations. We must leave the European Convention on Human Rights. Legal migration remains too high and must be reduced to manageable levels.

Migrants crossing Channel

ECONOMIC DEREGULATION

We have a golden opportunity for Britain to be a state unshackled from Brussels red tape. We must take an axe to the regulations tying British business up in knots.

Kemi Badenoch speaks to fishing community in Bridlington

PROTECTING OUR FISHING WATERS

EU boats continue to purloin stock rightfully owed to Britain's coastal communities. We must enshrine a 12-mile exclusion zone around our island where only British vessels can fish.

GET BREXIT DONE
GET BREXIT DONE
Heavyweight Boris Johnson had a punchy message in November 2019, weeks before the December 12 general election

we voted for!

Pictures: HENRY NICHOLLS/REUTERS

Brexit Day is celebrated in London on January 31, 2020

FIVE WAYS POLITICIANS HAVE BETRAYED US

BY **AARON NEWBURY**

These are the five ways politicians have sold out the 17.4 million people who backed Britain leaving the EU.

1. Remainer Sir Keir Starmer announced he wants a "reset" with the EU. The talks would see "dynamic alignment" with EU rules amid a push for closer trading ties to the single market – dragging Britain back into Brussels' orbit through the back door.

2. British fishermen were stabbed in the back as their fishing rights were sold out to Brussels. A new deal with the EU will now see French and Spanish boats plundering British waters for another 12 years.

3. The EU demanded a "Nigel Farage clause" as Labour courts talks with top eurocrats. The clause would see Brits forced to pay massive "compensation" should a future government reverse Labour's reset.

4. Labour signed Britain back up to the Erasmus scheme, costing hundreds of millions and letting in up to 50,000 EU students a year. Critics blasted the scheme as a "feeble attempt to suck up to Europe".

5. We are still not in control of our borders, net migration spiked post-Brexit, and tens of thousands still arrive on small boats. The ECHR is blocking deportations while human rights lawyers run rings around the government – a betrayal of all those who voted to take back control.

EXPRESS VOTE

Do you agree that Britain now deserves a Proper Brexit?

YES: 0901 133 4440
NO: 0901 133 4441
Calls cost 50p plus network access charge

Yes text DXYES to 63333
No text DXNO to 63333
Texts cost 50p plus standard network rate

You must have the bill payer's permission. Vote closes at midnight tonight. The Daily Express may contact you by post, SMS and/or email with offers, goods or services that may be of interest to you. To stop receiving SMS messages text 'NSNOINFO' to the originating number. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390.

ment has gone up and economic growth has stagnated. Keir Starmer is dragging us backwards, re-fighting the battles of the past, too busy trying to save his own skin than do what's best for our country.

"He is letting Brussels set our rules again, which will be worse for British farmers and producers."

Health Secretary Wes Streeting and Deputy PM David Lammy have said rejoining the EU customs union would boost economic growth.

Leading Brexiteer Sir Jacob said: "Brexit remains a great opportunity for this country. We need massive deregulation to help businesses thrive. This should include repealing the EU-inspired Climate Change Act and habitat directives which stop building and add costs to infrastructure such as the batty bat tunnel. The City of London does not want to be part of the reset because it is already harvesting the benefits of freedom; the rest of the economy ought to be allowed the same chance."

A Labour source said: "We have secured historic trade agreements with the US, India, EU, and South Korea, which will grow the economy, back British jobs, and put more money in people's pockets.

"The idea we have to choose between these is wrong.

"It's the Tories who failed to make the UK a great trading nation post-Brexit and Nigel Farage who says he'd rip up our deals."

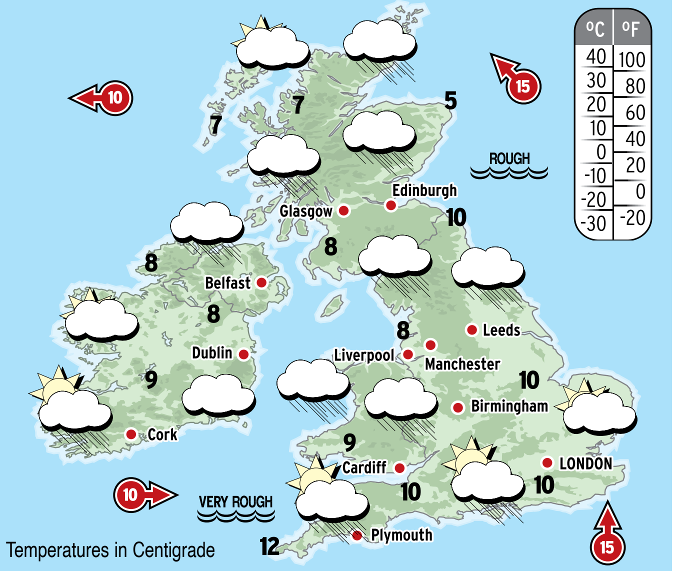
OPINION: PAGE 14

TIMELINE

1973 The Daily Express declares joining the European Economic Community to be "a mistake".
25 November 2010 Daily Express becomes the first national newspaper to declare Britain must leave the EU.
January 2013 Conservatives commit to holding an in-or-out EU referendum.
20 February 2016 David Cameron announces that a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU will be held on June 23 that same year.
21 February 2016 Mayor of London Boris Johnson announces he will campaign to Leave.
23 June 2016 The UK votes to leave the EU with 17.4 million in favour.
18 April 2017 Lacking a mandate, Theresa May triggers a snap election.
8 June 2017 The election is held and results in a hung parliament leading to years of back and forth as MPs attempt to frustrate Brexit.
9 July 2018 David Davis and Boris Johnson resign from Cabinet over objections to the Chequers plan.
15 Jan 2019 The first "meaningful vote" on a withdrawal agreement is held, marking round after round of similar ballots.
24 May 2019 Theresa May resigns as Prime Minister, unable to deliver Brexit.
23 July 2019 Boris Johnson wins Tory leadership election and becomes PM.
31 October 2019 Parliament passes a bill to call an early election on December 12 as Brexit still cannot be passed.
12 December 2019 Boris Johnson wins the election proposing an "oven-ready" Brexit deal.
9 January 2020 The European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill passes.
23 January 2020 The European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill gets Royal assent.
31 January 2020 The UK officially withdraws from the EU at 23:00 GMT. Thousands of Brexit supporters celebrate in Parliament Square.
2 March 2020 Talks with the EU officially start, with Brexit hero Lord Frost leading them for the UK.
1 October 2020 The EU launches legal action against the UK over the Internal Markets Bill.
16 October 2020 Johnson takes to TV to give notice that we must prepare for a no-deal Brexit
31 December 2020 The UK formally ends its transition period with the EU, and completely separates.

ARE THEY COMPLETELY MAD? NIGEL FARAGE GIVES HIS VERDICT: PAGES 6&7

WEATHER FORECAST



Temperatures in Centigrade

Today's summary: Cloudy start, rainy evening

North West: Wet with rain and drizzle, mostly light and patchy though. Moderate north-westerly winds. High 9C (48F).

Northern Ireland: Cloudy, with rain and drizzle for a while and showers later. Moderate north-westerly winds. High 8C (46F).

Wales: Damp start, clearing to brighter spells. Light winds, becoming milder later. High 9C (48F).

Midlands: Dull and grey with outbreaks of light rain and drizzle. Moderate north-westerly winds. High 9C (48F).

North East/Yorks: Grey and wet with patchy light rain and drizzle expected. Light winds. High 9C (48F).

Scotland: Drizzly start, turning cloudy later. Gentle winds throughout, staying cool. High 8C (46F).

East Anglia: Unsettled with the chance of showers, mainly later. Gentle southerly winds. High 10C (50F).

London/South East: Cloudy with periods of light rain. Clearing later. Moderate winds. Cool temperatures. High 10C (50F).

South: Wet and overcast with light rain, becoming showery later. Moderate northerly winds. High 10C (50F).

South West: Cloudy with light rain for a time. Sunshine and showers later. Gentle north-westerly winds. High 11C (52F).

Channel Isles: Bright with spells of sunshine, but also light showers. Brisk westerly winds. High 10C (50F).

Sea: North Sea: Moderate. Irish Sea: Moderate. Channel: Moderate.

UK OUTLOOK TOMORROW: Expect overcast skies with occasional rain, becoming clearer later. Mild winds throughout. Cooler temperatures as evening approaches.

SIX-DAY FORECAST

Temperatures in Centigrade

	SUN			MON			TUE			WED			THU			FRI		
		min	max		min	max		min	max		min	max		min	max		min	max
London	🌧	5	9	🌧	6	10	🌧	6	9	🌦	5	10	🌧	4	8	🌧	4	7
Belfast	🌧	3	7	🌧	5	7	🌧	4	6	🌧	6	7	🌧	4	7	🌧	3	5
Birmingham	🌧	4	8	🌧	4	8	🌧	4	7	🌧	5	9	🌧	3	7	🌧	3	6
Cardiff	🌧	4	9	🌧	5	9	🌧	5	8	🌧	5	9	🌧	4	8	🌧	3	7
Glasgow	🌧	4	8	🌦	4	8	🌧	4	6	🌧	4	7	🌧	3	7	🌧	2	6
Manchester	🌧	5	9	🌧	4	8	🌧	4	6	🌧	5	8	🌧	3	7	🌧	3	6
Newcastle	🌧	4	8	🌧	4	6	🌧	4	5	🌧	4	7	🌧	3	6	🌧	2	4
Norwich	🌧	5	9	🌧	4	8	🌧	5	7	🌦	4	9	🌧	3	6	🌧	3	5
Plymouth	🌦	6	10	🌧	7	10	🌧	7	10	🌧	7	10	🌧	6	10	🌧	6	9

Britain yesterday

24 hours to 5pm	SUN (hrs)	RAIN (ins)	TEMP (min)	(max)
Aberdeen	0.0	0.13	3	4
Aberporth	2.0	0.34	5	10
Alnwick	0.0	0.17	3	5
Belfast	0.0	0.30	3	7
Birmingham	0.3	0.06	3	9
B'mouth	2.8	0.76	7	10
Bristol	1.2	0.43	6	10
Cardiff	2.4	0.30	6	9
Durham	0.0	0.16	2	5
Edinburgh	0.0	0.01	2	5
Glasgow	0.0	0.00	3	5
Hull	0.0	0.22	3	5
Ipswich	0.0	0.08	2	8
Leeds	0.0	0.32	1	5
Lincoln	0.0	0.12	2	6
London	3.2	0.19	4	11
Manchester	0.0	0.02	3	7
Oxford	3.3	0.11	4	10
S'hampton	1.8	0.45	6	10
St Andrews	0.0	0.07	3	6

Moon, sun and tides

MOON rises: 2.43pm, sets: 7.16am
SUN rises London: 7.40am, sets: 4.48pm
Manchester rises: 7.55am, sets: 4.49pm

○ **Full Moon**
01 February

HIGH TIDE

London B'ge	(-), (12.25pm)
Liverpool	(9.46am), (10.18pm)
Greenock	(11.00am), (11.50pm)
Dover	(9.53am), (10.20pm)

Britain Extremes: (24 hours to 11pm Thursday) **Warmest:** Scilly: St Marys Airport, 11c (52f). **Coldest:** Loch Glascarnoch, -5c (23f). **Wettest:** Camborne, 0.98ins. **Sunniest:** Valley, 4.9hrs.

Lighting-up times

Belfast	5.00pm-8.12am
Birmingham	4.51pm-7.49am
Bristol	4.58pm-7.48am
Glasgow	4.48pm-8.11am
London	4.48pm-7.38am
Manchester	4.49pm-7.54am
Newcastle	4.41pm-7.57am

Europe forecast

Today

Amsterdam	Rain	8C/46F
Brussels	Cloudy	10C/50F
Dublin	Rain	8C/46F
Frankfurt	Drizzle	5C/41F
Geneva	Showers	7C/45F
Lisbon	Drizzle	15C/59F
Madrid	Sunny	12C/54F
Paris	Rain	10C/50F
Rome	Showers	14C/57F

Tomorrow

Amsterdam	Rain	7C/45F
Brussels	Drizzle	9C/48F
Dublin	Rain	8C/46F
Frankfurt	Cloudy	5C/41F
Geneva	Drizzle	8C/46F
Lisbon	Showers	16C/61F
Madrid	Rain	11C/52F
Paris	Rain	10C/50F
Rome	Fair	14C/57F

Around the world yesterday

		C	F
Amsterdam	Cloudy	1	34
Athens	Sunny	16	61
Barcelona	Fair	17	63
Berlin	Snow	-3	27
Budapest	Cloudy	4	39
Cairo	Sunny	20	68
Cape Town	Sunny	29	84
Casablanca	Cloudy	19	66
Corfu	Fair	15	59
Dublin	Cloudy	9	48
Dubrovnik	Thndr	9	48
Faro	Cloudy	16	61
Florence	Shwrs	8	46
Gibraltar	Cloudy	17	63
Guernsey	Rain	9	48
Hong Kong	Cloudy	19	66
Istanbul	Shwrs	12	54
Jersey	Shwrs	9	48
Larnaca	Fair	19	66
Las Palmas	Sunny	22	72
Los Angeles	Sunny	25	77
Luxor	Sunny	21	70
Malaga	Cloudy	19	66
Mallorca	Fair	16	61
Malta	Shwrs	15	59
Melbourne	Sunny	28	82
Miami	Sunny	21	70
Moscow	Fair	-15	5
Nairobi	Sunny	26	79
New Delhi	Fair	19	66
New York	Sunny	-7	19
Nice	Fair	11	52
Nicosia	Fair	19	66
Perth	Sunny	36	97
Prague	Cloudy	-1	30
Singapore	Cloudy	31	88
Stockholm	Cloudy	-3	27
Sydney	Sunny	29	84
Tel Aviv	Fair	22	72
Tenerife	Sunny	21	70
Toronto	Fair	-13	9
Tunis	Fair	19	66
Venice	Cloudy	7	45
Vienna	Cloudy	2	36
Warsaw	Cloudy	-5	23

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'Labour shows every sign of wanting to drag us back under the heel of Brussels...' Are they

Nigel Farage
Leader of Reform UK

ON the morning of June 24, 2016, Great Britain awoke to discover it would be leaving the European Union.

In an historic electoral turnout, some 17 million voters decreed they no longer wished to be controlled by unelected Brussels bureaucrats.

Having campaigned long and hard for years for a UK withdrawal, I allowed myself a quiet moment of satisfaction. At 4.10am I proudly announced to a gathering inside a nightclub: "I now dare to dream that dawn is breaking over an independent United Kingdom."

Since that momentous day I firmly believe Britain's standing in the world has changed for the better.

When it comes to foreign policy we now stand taller as a nation by acting independently of the EU.

The post-Brexit deals we have struck with economic powerhouses such as the USA and India, plus the leadership we have shown over Ukraine, are clear examples of an independent United Kingdom boldly reasserting itself on the world stage.

Unfortunately, when it comes to many of the other aspects of our withdrawal, our politicians have proved every bit as useless at managing it as all those overpaid Brussels commissioners from whom we escaped.

> **'There's a wonderful post-Brexit future out there... we just need to grasp it'**

Economically, we had a chance for Britain to forge a new path in the world, unshackled from the EU and all its rule-making and allow our businesses to thrive.

But the harsh truth is, however, that in many areas we have more regulations now than when we left.

For millions, Brexit was about taking back control of our borders. Yet what happened? Net migration reached record levels. Under Boris Johnson and his Conservative successors an unprecedented 3.8 million people arrived within three years.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands continue to turn up here illegally on small boats while successive governments have allowed human rights lawyers and the European Court of Human Rights to run rings around their attempts to deport them.

Betrayal has followed betrayal. Our fishermen were told we would recapture our waters. Result? EU boats continue to plunder our fish. Farmers were promised less environmental regulation yet are still practically choking on red tape.

The many benefits of our hard-fought Brexit freedoms are still there to be seized yet bafflingly Labour shows every sign of wanting to drag us back under the heel of Brussels. Are they completely mad?

For starters, the EU, still smarting over our departure, would insist on us accepting far stricter, less favourable terms than from our previous membership.

And those post-Brexit trade deals (one of the few things ministers have achieved these past few years) would have to be torn up immediately.

And while growth here might be sluggish, it's not as if EU economies have much to crow about. France and Italy are performing no better than us. Germany is practically a basket case.

The truth is this Labour government is hellbent on blaming all the country's current travails on Brexit simply to mask its own incompetence.

But it's not Brexit's fault we have chosen to sacrifice our energy security and pursue a mad dash to net zero while hammering households with

CORRECTIONS AND COMPLAINTS

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OPINION **14** WINE **34** SUDOKU **36** TRAVEL **45-50** GARDENING **58-59** CITY **65** SPORT **70**

Pictures: DANIEL LEAL / AFP

We want our country back
Vote to
CHOOSE FREEDOM
23RD JUNE
LEAVE THE EU

Campaigning ahead of 2016 referendum

Nigel Farage celebrates as Britain leaves the EU in 2020, four years after the referendum

completely mad?

sky-high bills. It's not Brexit's fault we continue to pump billions into our creaking health service with no visible signs of improvement.

Nor was it Brexit which embarked upon a succession of reckless tax increases which have forced entrepreneurs and wealth creators to pursue their dreams elsewhere.

Reform UK, you'll be happy to hear, will do things very differently.

We will harness our Brexit opportunities to create the most pro-business, pro-entrepreneurship government this country has seen in modern times, which will signal a change of attitude towards work, making money and success.

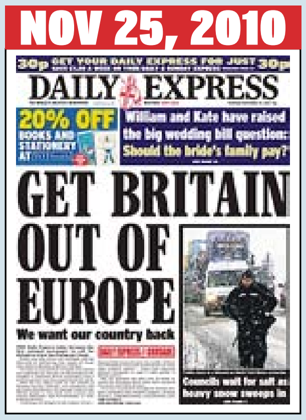
We will lower the tax burden on small businesses which have been neglected for too long by governments more interested in looking after large corporations.

We will scrap the meddling ECHR and start deporting all those who arrive here illegally, halting the small boat crossings within days.

We'll do away with all those idiotic, EU-derived directives on net zero which are costing both households and businesses a fortune.

There's a wonderful post-Brexit future out there, free from all these petty rules and directives which have been holding Britain back all these years. We just need to grasp it.

NOV 25, 2010



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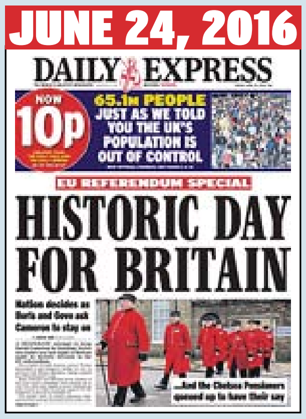
William and Kate have raised the big wedding bill question: Should the bride's family pay?

GET BRITAIN OUT OF EUROPE

We want our country back

Councils wait for salt as heavy snow sweeps in

JUNE 24, 2016



DAILY EXPRESS

NOW 10p

65.1m PEOPLE JUST AS WE TOLD YOU THE UK'S POPULATION IS OUT OF CONTROL

EU REFERENDUM SPECIAL

HISTORIC DAY FOR BRITAIN

Nation decides as Boris and Gove ask Cameron to stay on

...And the Chelsea Pensioners queued up to have their say

From our first call to leave the EU in 2010 to the 2016 vote backing Brexit and beyond, Express front pages have shaped the debate

Express led the campaign to set us free from EU

BY **AARON NEWBURY**

FOR decades the Daily Express has campaigned for British independence from Brussels. Your paper has long been dubious about the arguments for closer alignment with the continent, and declared in 1973 that joining the European Economic Community would be a mistake.

Since then, we have stood alongside our readers who patriotically believed our country deserved to stand outside the EU.

The Daily Express demanded a referendum, fought against meddling Eurocrats, and latterly held to account those who sought to frustrate the will of the British people, proudly championing our sovereignty.

In November 2010 we made history by becoming the first national paper to demand the UK leave the EU.

Our editor at the time, Peter Hill, understood that Express readers had long since lost faith in an overbearing Brussels elite.

Our front page declared: "From this day forth our energies will be directed to further the cause of those who believe Britain is Better Off Out." And those energies have never dwindled, despite the sneers of some in the political establishment.

The Daily Express inspired petitions that demanded Prime Minister David Cameron put our freedom to a vote. And he did so, in 2013, announcing there would be a referendum.

Since then this paper has not stopped. The Daily Express refused to be cowed, and we marched with our readers while informing the nation of the risks of uncontrolled immigration, ludicrous EU waste, and the diktats of officials in Brussels far removed from the impact of their law-making.

When the day came and 17.4 million Britons chose to liberate the UK from Europe, we knew the fight was far from over.

We exposed those in Westminster and Brussels who then sought to frustrate that exit process.

We called out those who attempted to call a re-run of the vote they had lost.

And since the day we left, we have not stopped campaigning to ensure we get a proper Brexit, the one YOU voted for.

We have shone a light on efforts by those in power to bring Britain closer to Europe through the back door.

We've railed against government plans to "reset" relations with the bloc Britons voted to leave.

Now six years on from the day we left the EU, the Daily Express's greatest-ever crusade continues, as we press on to ensure a proper Brexit is delivered for you.

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Gordon Brown sold reserves

Brown's gold blunder that left country £44bn short

EXCLUSIVE

BY **AARON NEWBURY**

GORDON Brown's catastrophic decision to sell off Britain's gold reserves has cost the nation a staggering £44billion, the Daily Express can reveal.

The then-Chancellor flogged more than half the country's holdings at rock-bottom prices between 1999 and 2002 to diversify assets, just as the precious metal was about to embark on a historic 25-year bull run.

The scale of Mr Brown's disaster has been laid bare as gold hit record highs of around £3,700 per troy ounce.

And experts warn that Britain is now dangerously exposed to risky US government bonds rather than the safe-haven asset.

Shadow Chancellor Sir Mel Stride said: "When Labour sold Britain's gold at the bottom of the market, that wasn't bad luck.

Devastating

"It was bad leadership. The cost of that disastrous decision is still being paid by the British people."

Analysis shows the gold was sold for around £2bn in proceeds, roughly £4bn when adjusted for inflation.

Today, it would be worth about £48bn.

Callum McGoldrick, of the TaxPayers' Alliance, said: "This was a short-sighted move that prioritised short-term cash over long-term national wealth.

"It is a stark reminder of how poor economic stewardship can have devastating long-term consequences."

Lindsay James, investment strategist at Quilter, said: "It is clear the UK now has more meaningful exposure to US government bonds at a time of rising US indebtedness, a falling dollar and weakening institutions."

The Treasury declined to comment.

Picture: JAMES SPEAKMAN/PA

Plumber Hannah Spencer was unveiled as the Green Party's candidate by Zack Polanski, inset

Reform and Greens roll up sleeves in by-election battle

Nigel Farage and Reform hopeful, GB News presenter Matt Goodwin, tour the Manchester constituency

BY **STEPH SPYRO**
Deputy Political Editor

NIGEL Farage and Zack Polanski hit the campaign trail yesterday ahead of next month's crunch by-election.

Labour won the Gorton and Denton seat in Greater Manchester with more than half the vote in 2024.

Mr Farage's Reform UK came second, narrowly beating the Greens.

But as polls suggest support for Sir Keir Starmer's party is crumbling, the Greens and Reform are aiming to topple Labour in the constituency.

The Reform UK leader joined his candidate, GB News presenter and former academic Matt Goodwin, in Denton for a walkabout yesterday.

Meanwhile, Green Party leader Zack Polanski visited the seat to unveil a 34-year-old plumber as his party's candidate.

Mr Polanski said: "Hannah Spencer will be a brilliant MP for the people of Gorton and Denton. I'm a Mancunian and know when someone genuinely wants to roll up their sleeves and work for the community. Hannah is that person. We have just days to stop Reform and make hope normal again."

Painful

Ms Spencer said: "The choice is clear – Green v Reform. Hope v hate."

Chancellor Rachel Reeves will visit the seat today to campaign, as Labour is due to reveal its own candidate.

The February 26 ballot, and May's local elections, will be vital for Keir Starmer, after he blocked Manchester mayor Andy Burnham from standing.

The head of the Fire Brigades Union warned Labour's 11 affiliated trade unions are prepared to call for him to quit if he fails to show the party is "delivering" in the coming months.

FBU general secretary Steve Wright insisted the government "needs to start delivering for working people".

Asked by Politics Home whether all 11 affiliates could come together and tell the PM to go if the May elections are as painful for the party as predicted, Mr Wright said: "I think so."

JENRICK URGES READERS TO DITCH HIS OLD 'IRRELEVANT' TORY PARTY

EXCLUSIVE

BY **KATIE HARRIS**

THE Tories are becoming an irrelevant "Lib Dems of the Right", Robert Jenrick declared in a fresh attack on his former party.

The Reform UK MP, who defected earlier this month, called on Daily Express readers to get behind Nigel Farage in order to have the best chance of ousting Sir Keir Starmer.

He insisted that backing the Tories was a "wasted vote" and risked a "crazy coalition" between Labour, the Greens and the Lib Dems.

Mr Jenrick said: "You can see from the incredible momentum Reform now has that the Conservative Party is dead. It is becoming irrelevant and is retreating into being the Lib Dems of the Right.

"It will only exist in the years to come in rare pockets of affluence in the suburbs of our big cities.

"It's not going to be a contender for government ever again.

"So Express readers who, like me, have been loyal to the Conservative Party for many years, who want to get rid of this failing Labour government, now have to rally behind Nigel Farage and Reform."

The Newark MP warned that "a vote for the Tories, whether in the May local elections or the general election, is a wasted vote and is only more likely to ensure Labour cling on, God forbid, in a crazy coalition with Zack Polanski and Ed Davey".

Mr Jenrick, *right*, ruled out any electoral deal between the Tories and Reform.

On the risk of splitting the Right-wing vote, the former immigration minister added: "The way to avoid that is for all Conservative voters to support Reform as the only way now to get rid of Labour and ensure there is a centre-Right government in this country that is able to get on and fix things for everyone. The Right has united and it has united behind Reform."

His comments come after Suella Braverman this week became the latest Tory big beast to jump ship to Reform at a rally with Mr Farage.

The insurgent party is consistently leading national opinion polls but the Conservatives have seen signs of a slight recovery in the past month.

The latest YouGov poll put Reform on 25%, Labour on 21%, the Tories on 17%, the Greens on 16% and the Lib Dems on 14%.

But Tory Chairman Kevin Hollinrake declared: "Reform are a one-man band.

"Those defecting are doing so because they care more about themselves than about the lives of Daily Express readers."

Chancellor hiked firms' costs

Reeves' jobs tax is forcing firms to send jobs abroad

BY **JONATHAN WALKER**

EMPLOYERS are pulling posts from the UK to dodge Labour's jobs tax.

Higher national insurance payments, workers' rights laws and minimum wage hikes have sparked a flood of firms moving overseas.

UK companies have often set up call centres or data processing sites abroad, but are now off-shoring managerial roles previously filled by graduates here.

One agency that helps British employers recruit staff in countries such as South Africa said its business had doubled,

Alex Fenton, CEO of recruiter The Legends Agency, reported a surge in back-office roles moving to countries such as South Africa.

He said: "In 2025 we dealt with 1,400 jobs that could have been in the UK. The previous year it was 600.

"The biggest trigger was the national insurance increase, but there are so many things going towards it."

Worrying

The firm nearly tripled its workforce from 170 to 473 this year to cope with demand.

It comes after Alex Baldock, CEO of retail giant Currys, warned rising costs were forcing the company to move back-office jobs abroad.

A survey by Santander also found 47% of firms are eyeing international expansion over the next three years.

Shadow Chancellor Sir Mel Stride said: "Rachel Reeves promised to support working people. Instead, her first Budget hit them with higher taxes, reduced competitiveness, and has driven jobs out of the UK.

"Labour's jobs tax has forced businesses to pay an additional £900 in national insurance for a worker on the average wage. It's meant job losses, frozen pay, cancelled investment, and a worrying rise in jobs being sent abroad."

China thaw hope as sanctions against six UK politicians lifted

But PM accused of 'kowtowing' to Beijing

BY **MARTYN BROWN**
Political Editor in Shanghai

Sir Keir Starmer in Shanghai yesterday

CHINA has lifted sanctions on six British politicians, sparking hope that relations between the two countries are thawing.

Sir Keir Starmer said a travel ban and other sanctions "no longer apply" to four Conservative MPs and two members of the House of Lords.

But the politicians affected, including former Tory leader Sir Iain Duncan Smith, said that the announcement sent a "damaging signal" because restrictions remain in place for other campaigners.

They said they did not want to be "used as a bargaining chip", and insisted they would not stop speaking out against human rights abuses, including the alleged targeting of the Uyghur minority in China's Xinjiang province.

China had imposed the sanctions in 2021, with Tory MPs Nusrat Ghani, Tom Tugendhat, Neil O'Brien, Sir Iain and Tim Loughton – who is no longer in Parliament – all targeted.

Peers Baroness Kennedy and Lord Alton, members of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, were also sanctioned.

Sir Keir's three-day trip to China is an attempt to thaw relations with the country, which has the second-biggest economy in the world behind the US.

The Prime Minister said the UK's relationship with China is in a "good, strong place" following his talks with President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

There is disquiet among critics of the Communist nation, who argue it has a poor record on human rights and poses a threat to the UK's national security. Some Conservatives have accused Sir Keir of "kowtowing" to Beijing.

However, the PM insisted the outcome "vindicated" his approach, and said his visit had "provided the opportunity for a leader-to-leader discussion on sensitive issues".

He told GB News: "I know that the action taken in relation to our parliamentarians has been a real cause of concern, understandably so.

"And therefore I raised that issue whilst I was there, and the Chinese are absolutely clear in response – the restrictions no longer apply. President Xi said to me that means all parliamentarians are welcome." The PM also suggested Xi could come to the UK next year. He added: "Obviously, we're hosting the G20 [summit] in 2027. China is a G20 country, and therefore I hope he'll attend."

The sanctioned politicians had been banned from entering China, and Chinese citizens and institutions were prohibited from doing business with them because they highlighted human rights violations against the Uyghurs. Tory leader Kemi Badenoch cast doubt on the move. She said: "Let's see how long this lasts. I think this is something that they have done so that the Chinese president can have a visit to Parliament.

"I wouldn't be surprised if sanctions go back after that. We need to stop being naive and think that if we go on a visit and then they lift sanctions, everything is fine."

SIR KEIR DECLINES TO GO UNDERCOVER TO THWART COMMUNIST SPIES

KEIR Starmer insisted he was not concerned about being spied on while getting dressed in China.

The Prime Minister said he did not follow the example of Theresa May, who reportedly changed her clothes under a duvet in case she was being watched by prying eyes.

Sir Keir was the first UK PM to visit the Communist superpower since Mrs May in 2018. Asked if he changed under his bed clothes while in Beijing, he said: "No, I can confirm that I didn't. And I've always said that we need to seize the opportunities mindful of our national security. What I think is wrong, is simply putting your head in the sand."

He also said that he would visit China on holiday with his family. And the PM revealed that he even has his own Labubu – the hugely popular quirky Chinese plush toys.

Asked if was familiar with the retail blockbuster, one of the biggest Chinese exports to the UK, he said: "I am familiar and, in fact, I've got a little one for myself.

"I've got one, yes. I don't think it'll last long with my children!"

Starmer shrugs off Trump's 'dangerous' Beijing trade warning

BY **MARTYN BROWN**

SIR Keir Starmer has attempted to shrug off warnings by Donald Trump that it is "very dangerous" for Britain to deal with China.

The US president, *left*, had lashed out after the PM cosied up to Xi Jinping in an attempt to improve relations.

It comes after they had already butted heads over Mr Trump's vow to take over Greenland and when he dismissed the contribution made by Nato in Afghanistan.

Sir Keir and President Xi held lengthy talks on Thursday that led to cuts to whisky tariffs and visa-free travel for Britons.

The US president was asked at the premiere of the new documentary about his wife Melania what he thought about the UK getting into business with China.

He replied: "Well, it's very dangerous for them to do that."

Mr Trump went on to repeat his criticism of Sir Keir's ally, Mark Carney, the prime minister of Canada, for seeking a trade deal with Beijing.

"It's even more dangerous, I think for Canada," he said. "Canada is not doing well. They are doing very poorly and you can't look at China as the answer."

Asked about the remarks, Sir Keir said: "I've seen the clip from Donald Trump. I think it's fair to say he was really talking much more about Canada than the UK."

Pressed again, he added: "As you would expect, between allies, we talked to him and his team about this [trip] beforehand. And I think I'm right in saying that President Trump is himself expected to come to China in April.

"But this trip, from a UK point of view, has been a real success."

Gates 'got STD from Russian girl'

BY **CHRISTOPHER BUCKTIN**

BILL Gates contracted a sexually transmitted disease after sleeping with Russian girls, Jeffrey Epstein claimed in an unverified email.

In a memo to himself on July 18, 2013, the paedophile financier wrote: "To add insult to the injury you them *[sic]* implore me to please delete the emails regarding your STD, your request that I provide you antibiotics that you can surreptitiously give to Melinda and the description of your penis."

Epstein later sent himself an email in another voice, stating that he was "helping Bill to get drugs... to deal with consequences of sex with Russian girls".

The allegations, contained in the latest US release of Epstein's files, are unverified. Microsoft tycoon Gates, 70, has yet to comment. He was married to Melinda from 1994 to 2021. Gates' wealth is estimated at £85billion. Epstein died worth a reported £400m.

Epstein files photo released last year

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In Store | Delivery | Click & Collect Selected stores and lines. Subject to availability. Kellogg's Coco Pops 480g, £2.85 (59p per 100g). Kellogg's Rice Krispies 430g, £2.85 (66p per 100g).Diet Coke Cans 30x330ml, £8 (8p per 100ml). Maltesers Milk Chocolate Medium Easter Egg 96.5g, was £1.74 now £1 (£1.03 per 100g). Cadbury Medium Mini Eggs Easter Egg 95g, was £1.74 now £1 (£1.05 per 100g). Cadbury Dairy Milk Freddo Faces Chocolate Easter Egg 90g, was £1.74 now £1 (£1.11 per 100g). KitKat Chunky Milk Chocolate Small Easter Egg 110g, was £1.74 now £1 (91p per 100g). Cadbury White Chocolate Buttons Easter Egg 91g, was £1.74 now £1 (£1.10 per 100g). Smarties 100g, was £1.74 now £1 (£1 per 100g). Easter egg offer ends 02/02/26. Delivery, collection and minimum basket charges may apply. Delivery/collection slots subject to availability. May exclude Asda Express and small stores, see ASDA.com/smallstores

SHOCK ALLEGATION AND

Epstein file was forced

BY **CHRISTOPHER BUCKTIN**

A CLAIM that an underage victim of paedophile Jeffrey Epstein was forced to perform a sex act on Donald Trump, was reported to the FBI.

The allegation dating from around 35 years ago has appeared among three million pages from the "Epstein files" relating to claims surrounding the late billionaire sex offender.

The document claimed a "13 to 14-year-old" girl bit Mr Trump while performing the sex act in New Jersey in around 1991 at a time when the now-US president was living in New York running his property business.

She was "allegedly hit in the face after she laughed about biting" him, the document claimed. The same document records that the FBI forwarded the lead to its Washington office to conduct an interview.

But the US Department of Justice warned that the newly released files included everything that was sent to the FBI by the public in relation to the investigation and "may include fake or falsely submitted images, documents or videos".

The DoJ added: "Some of the documents contain untrue and sensationalist claims against President Trump that were submitted to the FBI right before the 2020 election.

"To be clear, the claims are unfounded and false, and if they have a shred of credibility, they certainly would have been weaponized against President Trump already."

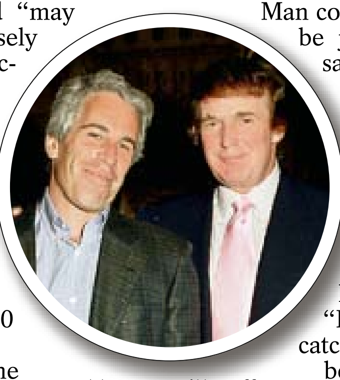
The files also include further claims about Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor's friendship with his paedophile pal, who took his own life in August 2019 as he awaited trial for child sex offences. In the documents, the royal appears to tell his disgraced socialite friend Ghislaine Maxwell not to "catch anything nasty on your travels" after she tried to entice him to Epstein's island with "five stunning redheads".

Maxwell, who is serving 20 years for helping Epstein abuse teenage girls, addresses someone called "The Invisible Man" as "Andrew" and refers to "Sarah and the kids".

An email exchange from August 2002 shows the two accounts talking about organising a weekend together on "the Island" only for The Invisible Man to decline. In an email signed "A", he writes: "As the planning is getting more difficult over the bank holiday weekend here, I am thinking now I might join Sarah and the kids in Sotogrande for a few days, which would be very important and a good thing for the girls, rather than trek across the pond.

"Please will you give me permission to do so and I am conscious of the 'better offer' syndrome but in this case it wouldn't be that...I think!"

In her reply dated August 24, 2002, Maxwell wrote: "Andrew sweetheart – I fully understand if you want to spend time with w/ Sarah and the kids. I will not be remotely offended – sad not to spend time w/you and sad not to see you but at this point w/precious holidays and few days off I agree that this idea of coming to the Island looks less appealing".



Donald Trump with Jeffrey Epstein; below, Andrew with Epstein's enabler Maxwell

In a follow-up email sent on August 25, 2002, after The Invisible Man confirmed he would not be joining her, Maxwell said: "No problem, [redacted], who is now coming and five other stunning redheads will all just have to play with ourselves."

In a reply on August 27, The Invisible Man wrote: "Look forward to catching up with you before you disappear to some exotic place, and please don't catch anything nasty on your travels!

"Masses of love and thanks, A xxx"

Within the documents, a search for "Prince Andrew", as he was formerly known, gains 2,305 results.

Other documents show Epstein bequeathing Maxwell $5million in his will "if she survives me".

Records also indicate that Maxwell's US citizenship certificate listed her official address as Epstein's residence on his island of Little Saint James.

She became a naturalised American citizen in 2002 and is listed as being employed by Epstein as "manager".

Much of the abuse of young women is believed to have taken place on the island, which was reportedly visited by Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor and Lord Mandelson, among other high-profile figures.

There is no suggestion that either was involved in any wrongdoing.

Deputy US Attorney General Todd Blanche said the total Epstein files

‘ANDREW EMAILS’ IN 3 MILLION DOCUMENTS

claim underage girl into Trump sex act

Picture: ALEX WROBLEWSKI/AFP

Donald and Melania at the film premiere

A wife less ordinary... Melania’s doc premiere

BY **STEPHEN BEECH**

DONALD Trump had to share the limelight for once with his wife Melania at the premiere of her new movie.

Melania: Twenty Days to History follows the former model in the run-up to Trump’s second inauguration, and marks the first time a US president’s wife has featured in such a documentary.

The First Lady, 55, looked stunning in a Dolce & Gabbana buttoned dress and black stilettos for the event at the Trump-Kennedy Centre in Washington.

The couple were joined for the invite-only premiere by key members of the Trump administration, including defence secretary Pete Hegseth. Rapper and Trump supporter Nicki Minaj, 43, was also there on Thursday.

Melania’s director Brett Ratner, who has rarely worked in Hollywood since a string of sexual misconduct allegations in 2017, also attended.

But notably absent were most of Trump’s five children. Donald Trump Jr was present, but Barron Trump, the 19-year-old son the president shares with Melania, was not.

Also absent was Homeland Security secretary Kristi Noem, who did not appear on the red carpet as she faces intense pressure to resign after the fatal shooting of a protester by Border Patrol agents in Minneapolis. Melania, an executive producer of the new movie, said the film offered a rare insight into the presidency. wShe told the invited audience: “Some have called this a documentary. It is not.

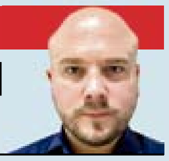
“It is a creative experience that offers perspectives, insights and moments that only few perceive.”

She added: “You will see humour, you will see grief, you will see fashion. So I’m very proud of the film.”

The new film is distributed by Amazon MGM Studios. Melania’s production company was paid some £29million for the rights to the film, which some have claimed could be an attempt by Amazon

Nicki Minaj attended event

REVIEW



GEORGE SIMPSON

Express Film Editor

MELANIA ★★

THE most controversial film of 2026 is in cinemas this weekend after movie critics across the world, including me, were refused early screenings.

The Melania Trump documentary has been ridiculed for its lack of pre-sale tickets, and at the earliest public showing I could find at a local Cineworld yesterday, there were seven people in the audience.

It starts with Melania catwalking on to Trump Force One as the Rolling Stones play over a shot of a Bobblehead figurine of her husband as the Terminator on the pilot’s dashboard. Quite the opening, but what follows is all rather slow and vanilla – a downside of the subject matter having the final cut.

Melania is clearly an intelligent woman who has a real eye for style when adjustments are made to her 1930s gangster hat for the inauguration. Although clearly desperate to reinvent herself as the matriarch of a new Camelot, surrounded by the gaudy Versailles tack of her husband’s New York apartments, it feels more Jack Sparrow gold teeth than Jackie Kennedy glitz and glamour.

Many scenes bore as Melania – who narrates throughout in a monotone pitch – spends too much time in service lifts with sycophants.

There are also the painfully stiff moments when she talks about her all-important work. Brigitte Macron and the Queen of Jordan cameo in these before the action heads to Washington for the big day.

The Donald himself features prominently in scenes that just about begin to humanise the subject, with her backstage YMCA dancing and speech suggestions. But overall, it’s a humourless documentary that takes itself far too seriously.

The redeeming features are a few behind-the-scenes moments of actual interest, including Joe Biden and Kamala Harris backstage, hands in pockets, looking very glum, before Trump’s swearing-in.

At 2am in the Executive Residence, we see Trump in the side kitchen ordering burgers before the couple say goodnight to fawning director Brett Ratner.

A good vanity project for the Trumps but not much for anyone else.

● ***Melania is out now in cinemas.***

In 1930s hat and at work

Springsteen song blasting ICE hits No1 spots

BY **STEPHEN BEECH**

BRUCE Springsteen’s song slamming the ICE raids in Minneapolis has raced to No1 around the world.

Streets of Minneapolis shot to the top of the iTunes charts in 19 countries including the UK, USA, Australia and Canada just hours after its release.

The Born in the USA singer, 76, wrote, recorded and released the song in less than a week, after ICE agents and allied federal officers shot dead two protesters this month. The lyrics mention both victims, mum Renee Good and nurse Alex Pretti.

Springsteen has also slammed ICE’s “Gestapo tactics”, saying US citizens are now being murdered for exercising their right to protest. A White House spokes-woman said the administration is focused on “removing dangerous criminal illegal aliens”, not on songs.

As tensions rise between US citizens and authorities, ex-CNN host Don Lemon, 59, was arrested after he filmed an anti-ICE protest in a Minnesota church.

If your skin is black or brown my friend

Bruce Springsteen’s video

Schitt's Creek star Catherine dies after short illness at 71

BY **CARLY DUFFY**

Actress Catherine O'Hara

SCHITT'S Creek actress Catherine O'Hara has died aged 71 after a career spanning five decades.

She died at her home in Los Angeles yesterday following a brief illness, her manager said.

The Canadian-American actress rose to global fame when she starred in 1990 Christmas classic Home Alone as the mother of left-behind son Kevin, played by Macaulay Culkin.

While she had many acting credits to her name after Home Alone, her role as Moira Rose in Schitt's Creek, from 2015 to 2020, gave her a second wind in her 60s, earning her an Emmy for outstanding lead actress in a comedy series, and a Golden Globe for Best Actress in a TV comedy.

Her last public appearance was at the Primetime Emmys in September, when she was nominated for two awards. She was up for a Golden Globe earlier this month for Best Supporting Actress on Television for her role in Apple TV's The Studio.

She is survived by husband Bo Welch and sons Matthew and Luke.

Got your winning numbers?

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Your numbers

02 24 31 4

08 11 19 29 58

06 15 24 37 4

Lotto

It could be you

Rules & Procedures apply.
Players must be 18+.

Clare with John Gordon Sinclair in Gregory's Girl

BY **SUE CRAWFORD**

COOL and catchy, Clare Grogan's distinctive vocals became one of the sounds of the 1980s as lead singer of Altered Images – the band renowned for their No 2 hit Happy Birthday.

Regularly appearing on Top of the Pops, with her punky style and gamine beauty, her face graced the covers of countless magazines.

But she never expected that 45 years after their most famous record flew up the charts she'd be singing it again – in her 60s. Now, Clare is taking on the Altered Images mantle once more for the Happy Birthday Tour to mark the hit's anniversary.

Still instantly recognisable, she laughs as she reflects on what her teenage self would have thought, saying: "I'd have been mortified if you'd told me I'd still be singing Happy Birthday in my 60s!

"After Altered Images ended, I had a big pause and when I first got asked back to do an arena tour, I remember thinking 'I can't be singing Happy Birthday when I'm in my 40s'.

"Here I am at 63 singing it! But I really enjoy it. I love looking out into the audience and thinking 'we've all been through some sh** in life, but we're still able to come together to have this really joyous moment'."

The band, who met as schoolmates in Glasgow, will be performing the entire Happy Birthday album on their tour of England and Scotland, together with a selection of other hits.

But Clare says she was nervous about the idea at first, admitting: "I did wonder – can I pull this off? I listened to the entire album and at first, I was like 'oh my God!' It's so young, so fresh and raw.

"But I realised I would love the opportunity to sing these songs one more time."

After three hit albums and six Top 40 singles in the early 80s, including See Those Eyes and Bring Me Closer, the band split in 1983, mainly due to physical and emotional burn-out. Clare says: "I was pretty much lost at sea at that point. I was 23 and it seemed like it was all over for me."

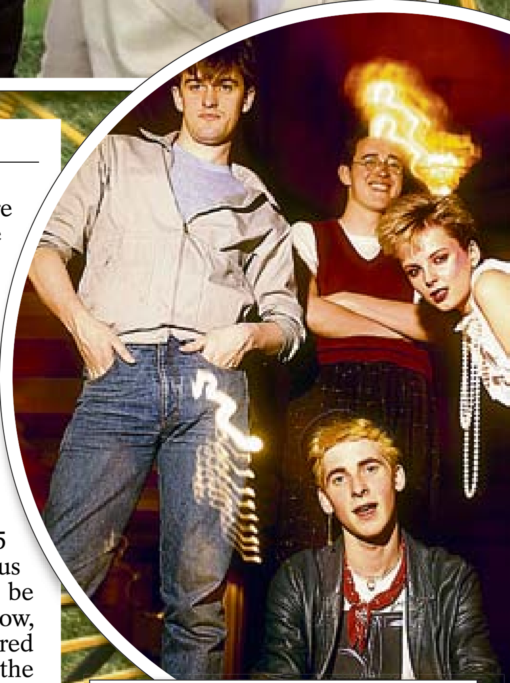
Shockingly, she was also penniless. She says: "I hadn't made any money, despite three successful albums. Ask any band from the 80s and they'll tell you that somebody made money, but it's very rarely the band.

"Even when I was at the top of the charts, I was earning £75 a week. The music business is notoriously messy and we were at an age where we desperately wanted to be part of it, so we didn't ask questions.

"Also, there seemed something vulgar in talking about money but I think that's a big mistake – you've got to ask the questions."

Clare's success in Altered Images coincided with her starring in 1981 coming-of-age film Gregory's Girl alongside John Gordon Sinclair.

Still at school and only 17, she was working part-time as a waitress in a Glasgow restaurant when she



Clare on Top of the Pops in 1981 and, top, with her bandmates

ANNIVERSARY TOUR FOR ALTERED IMAGES

I'd have been mortified if you'd told me I'd still be singing Happy Birthday in my 60s. But it's...

STILL A JOY

At 2022 Rewind festival in Perth

was approached about a role by a friend of writer and director Bill Forsyth.

When Altered Images ended, Clare began working as a Sky television presenter, as well as re-establishing herself as an actress.

SHE appeared in Red Dwarf and Father Ted, and also spent a year in EastEnders as PI Ros Thorne. Clare is married to former Altered Images guitarist-turned record producer Steve Lironi. The couple own three restaurants together and live in North London with their 21-year-old daughter, Elle.

Determined to be a mum, she had six miscarriages and four failed attempts at IVF before she and Steve finally adopted Elle at eight months.

Clare says: "It was a tough decade. I lost my first baby when I was 31. I was 43 when Elle came into our lives. But we got to the conclusion that we were always meant to get to. I really believe that. She was the daughter waiting for me."

At the height of her fame, Clare was linked to Spandau Ballet guitarist Gary Kemp. He was so lovestruck, he even wrote the 1983 No1 single True about her.

LAUGHING, she says: "That's the kind of inspiration I am! I was really friendly with Gary for a while...but to say that we were dating would be a slight exaggeration – we were both so busy. I used to tease my husband about True. I'd say 'can I just say, I have inspired one of the greatest love songs ever!'

"I'm actually almost embarrassed about it now. I don't know why, it's obviously such a lovely thing."

Three years ago, she and the band, who still play at festivals, released a fourth album, Mascara Streakz, 37 years after the last one. But she is still proud of her old hits and says: "I don't think I'd be doing what I'm doing now if it wasn't for them. As for Happy Birthday, I have to sing it at family parties. I always say, 'Are you guys not sick of me doing this?' And they're like, 'No!'."

● *Altered Images the Happy Birthday Tour begins in September. Tickets at alteredimages.band*

DAILY EXPRESS
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For Britain's sake, we must stop slide back towards EU

ONE of the proudest moments in the history of the Express came a decade ago this June when the people of this great nation voted to break free from the European Union.

We campaigned for a vote to Leave and today we demand that our government delivers on the promise of Brexit, instead of betraying the will of the people.

In November 2010, we were the first national newspaper to call for Britain to exit the bloc.

Millions of Britons will never forget the freedom and joy in 2016 when – to the dismay of our timid establishment – the country voted to reclaim our sovereignty from Brussels.

Brexit is still loathed by powerful figures within Whitehall and the nation's political elite.

There is a constant push to make us once again a rule taker, a mere satellite of the EU.

◆◆◆

Senior Labour figures talk of Brexit as an event which harmed the economy, rather than a chance to embrace its opportunities for growth.

They would rather hitch our future to the sclerotic and wheezing political entity across the Channel than torch red tape and give British businesses the competitive advantages they need to thrive.

We must never forget that Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer was Jeremy Corbyn's Shadow Brexit Secretary and that he championed a second referendum.

The wasted years of parliamentary resistance in the wake of the Leave vote meant Britain was slow off the blocks when it came to establishing a new identity as a fearless and independent trading nation.

The pandemic, the economic and energy crisis triggered by the war in the Ukraine, and the arrival of the most left-wing government in decades caused the UK to start its post-Brexit journey in a climate of adversity.

However, being outside the EU allowed us to deliver an extraordinary Covid vaccine scheme, and we are thrilled by the raft of trade agreements which will deliver real benefits for businesses, workers and their families.

◆◆◆

We must make up for lost time and build an economy that will provide our children with the best jobs in the world.

That will not happen if Labour – as Reform UK leader Nigel Farage warns today – puts us "under the heel of Brussels" once again.

Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson is appalled that by "slowly taking us back into the orbit of Brussels, the Starmer government is destroying Brexit".

We must not allow this to happen.

This is why we are campaigning for a "proper Brexit" to ensure the greatest opportunity for growth and prosperity and national renewal in decades is not squandered.

Please join us in this mission. For a century and a quarter, Express readers have defended all that is great about this splendid country.

The fight goes on today.

A decade later and where is the Brexit we were promised?

Nigel Farage reacts to the Brexit referendum result in 2016 after campaigning hard

Sam Lister
Deputy Editor

IN the early hours of a bright June morning 10 years ago I walked along the River Thames in a dazed state as I realised everything had changed. I had been dispatched to cover the Stronger In campaign's referendum results event on the Southbank and most of Westminster expected it to be the victory party. When I had arrived the previous evening, spirits were high, with politicians, campaigners and journalists mingling while the coverage was played on a big screen.

There were cameras from all of the major stations at one end of the room ready to film live reactions from guests as the results came in. But once they did begin to roll in, the mood quickly turned sour as the gathering realised they were on course to lose.

Tempers flared in the early hours as Labour's heartlands voted to Leave. I watched as one of the party's senior MPs, Chris Bryant, called Ed Miliband a "t***pot" when he popped up on a giant TV to ruminate on the results so far. Bryant went on to suggest he wanted to punch the former leader, who had been replaced the year before by Jeremy Corbyn, for leaving the Labour party in such a bad state that it was unable to persuade its voters to support Remain.

BEFORE the full results were in, most of the politicians had skedaddled. Meanwhile, on the other side of the river Nigel Farage and his gang were celebrating a shock victory.

After decades of campaigning for Britain to be freed from the shackles of Brussels bureaucracy, the country had agreed it was time for us to chart our own path.

But what happened next was an unprecedented insight into how the liberal ruling class reacts when ordinary people reject its world view. What do you do if you don't like the way the masses have voted? Tell them they got it wrong and try to rerun the poll. The People's Vote, a rag tag group of Lefty luvvies, Greens, Lib Dems and Labour figures, pushed for a second referendum.

In parliament, Remainers from across the parties bandied together to uncover the most arcane and obscure rules to force or block votes.

The UK had a brilliant opportunity to forge a new future in a rapidly changing world, a mandate from the country to do just that.

Instead, obstructive civil servants and pompous politicians who believed they knew better than the people they are supposed to serve did everything in their power to delay, overturn and stymie every attempt to deliver on the vote to Leave.

As the sclerotic European Union stuttered on, its growth lagging behind the United States and China, Britain had the chance to become the buccaneering nation that was promised.

But the opportunity was squandered. Instead, Brexit was treated by many in Westminster as an admin task, something to be mitigated so things could carry on pretty much as before.

Tory infighting meant the party whipped through prime ministers at an astonishing rate.

Boris Johnson's turn coincided with Covid so, despite his historic achievement in finally getting Britain out of the bloc in the face of ferocious opposition that even ended up in the courts, the pandemic overtook everything and eventually led to his downfall.

But coulda, woulda, shoulda. The rights and wrongs of who did what must be left in the past now. Going over who is to blame for what can help us work out how to avoid repeating the same mistakes but we must start from where we are now.

Keir Starmer, the man who led Labour's opposition in parliament at the height of the Brexit Wars, is in power and he is plotting to hitch us back up to Brussels.

VOTERS wanted lower immigration and proper control over Britain's borders but instead have endured the polar opposite. Our economy continues to stagnate and our fishermen are still at the mercy of fishing rights that favour their European competitors.

The Daily Express was the first newspaper to campaign for Britain's freedom.

It was our much-missed late former political editor Patrick O'Flynn who realised there could be a brighter future for the country outside the EU.

He wanted our government to have all the powers it needed to give the people it works for the kind of country they want. We will campaign for that vision to be delivered as promised. It is time to Give Us a Proper Brexit.

'The country agreed it was time for us to chart our own path'

Carole Malone

FUN, FEISTY AND FEARLESS

Email me at carole.malone@reachplc.com ● Follow me on Twitter @thecarolemalone

Butcher medic's easy exit

SO, KOWTOW Sir Keir went to China – and got nothing. He promised history-making deals and ended up with lower whisky tariffs, the scrapping of visas for tourists (big wow) and a deal to stop the boats which, just like the one-in-one-out scheme, won't stop a single one.

But what did China get in return? We probably won't know just how far Starmer's sold Britain down the Yangtze River – until it's too late!

KATIE PRICE who married her fourth husband, chancer Lee Andrews, just four days after meeting him says: "There are no words for what we have." I'm sure there'll be plenty – all of them four-letter ones – when this silly marriage falls apart probably by the end of next week. Has life taught this woman nothing?

ACCORDING to its own report, the BBC says it is middle-class, metropolitan and male. It forgot to add racist, institutionally-biased and prone to protecting paedophiles and perverts...and it doctors the news.

POOR Rachel Reeves. She's been left with a quivering lip (yet again) this week after Keir Starmer kicked her off the China trip at the last minute.

If she's wondering why, I'd hazard a guess it might be the 13 embarrassing U-turns the government's had to make thanks to her catastrophic policies, the fact that business is in the toilet and unemployment is rocketing.

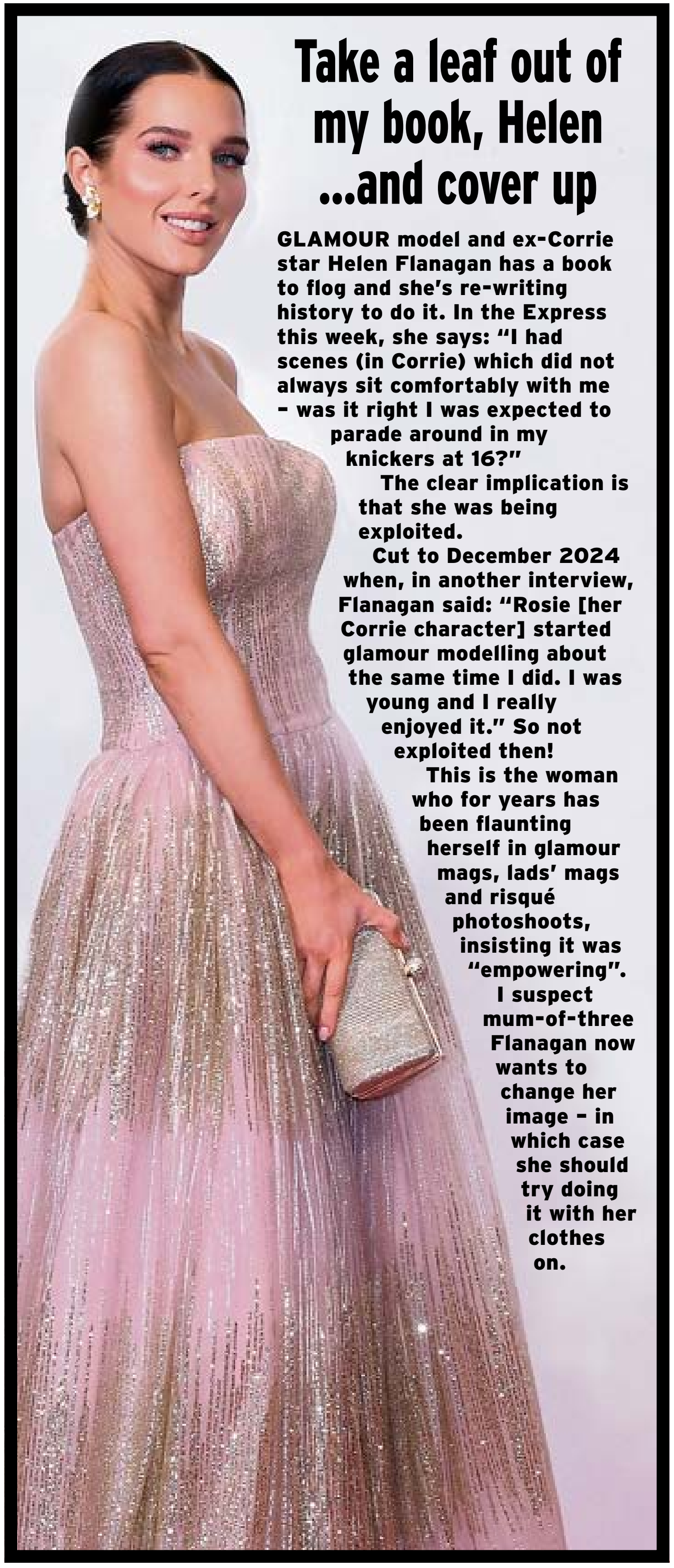
But I suspect it's mainly because she's an idiot!

FUNNY isn't it that Victoria Beckham is rarely seen with her Spice Girl bandmates these days (that period of her life is just too low rent for her now).

But this week, as Brand Beckham continued to take a battering, there was Victoria posing up (and getting lots of positive publicity) with the girls celebrating Emma Bunton's 50th birthday.

You've got to hand it to Posh – when her baby's in trouble, the woman's out fighting for it like a Rottweiler. No, not baby Brooklyn – but Brand Beckham!

Picture: JAMES VEYSEY/BAFTA/SHUTTERSTOCK



Take a leaf out of my book, Helen ...and cover up

GLAMOUR model and ex-Corrie star Helen Flanagan has a book to flog and she's re-writing history to do it. In the Express this week, she says: "I had scenes (in Corrie) which did not always sit comfortably with me – was it right I was expected to parade around in my knickers at 16?"

The clear implication is that she was being exploited.

Cut to December 2024 when, in another interview, Flanagan said: "Rosie [her Corrie character] started glamour modelling about the same time I did. I was young and I really enjoyed it." So not exploited then!

This is the woman who for years has been flaunting herself in glamour mags, lads' mags and risqué photoshoots, insisting it was "empowering".

I suspect mum-of-three Flanagan now wants to change her image – in which case she should try doing it with her clothes on.

GREAT Ormond Street Hospital says it's "deeply and profoundly sorry" about monster doctor, Yaser Jabbar, who inflicted hideous harms on more than ONE HUNDRED children over five years. This charlatan even carried out totally unnecessary operations that left children permanently in agony.

I'm sorry but an apology is nowhere near enough for all that – not for the ruined lives of one hundred children.

I've seen some of the injuries caused by this butcher – amputations, disfigurement, deformities, scars.

There were even children whose limbs literally snapped after Jabbar operated on them.

So how come staff at Great Ormond Street didn't see any of this?

How come the nurses, the managers, the doctors, the clinical staff did nothing while this maniac was inflicting pain and disfigurement on vulnerable children?

Why didn't they stop him, report him, snatch the damn scalpel out of his hands?

It couldn't be because Jabbar is a Muslim could it, and they didn't want to be seen to be racist?

Were they scared for their own careers if they reported him?

If so, shame on the lot of them because their careers are worth nothing if they looked the other way while kids were being mutilated.

I've heard people saying this week we mustn't forget the great work that's been done at GOSH.

I'm sorry it's not great work to turn a blind eye to 100 kids being maimed and disfigured when they never needed to be. And if that can happen at this hospital – what else has?

This surely has to be criminal negligence – something the police are currently looking at.

But the big shocker is that Jabbar was allowed by the hospital to resign in 2023 and walk away scot-free.

Was it hoping this would all just go away? Jabbar is believed to have fled the country – so when Great Ormond Street says sorry – it's tosh because it allowed this butcher to scarper without facing the consequences of what he'd done. Thanks to their cowardice/inaction/negligence Jabbar is now in another country and probably maiming more poor kids as we speak.

What's the point of a health service if the people within it allow this kind of travesty to happen?

We already know that those who DO blow the whistle on incompetence are often persecuted and hounded out of their jobs while the medics causing the harm are protected and allowed to continue hurting people.

This is what needs to be investigated at GOSH, because if there was a culture of fear around reporting doctors like Jabbar, then the people responsible for that need to be sued to hell and back.

Until now, GOSH has basked in a stellar reputation, but how can parents ever feel safe sending their kids there now? When a child is ill it's the worst kind of living hell for any parent.

They need to know their precious babies are in safe hands – not monsters who mutilate them and cowards who look the other way.

And I don't care how many new safety procedures GOSH has put in place (presumably it had procedures before too?) or how many reviews it's churned out or how many apologies it makes, the fact remains the people inside that hospital who allowed this travesty to happen are still there!

ACTRESS Brenda Blethyn – Vera to you and me – says she and husband Michael Mayhew have bought the flat below them. She lives in one, he in the other, because she says: "He's always cold and I'm always hot." Thank God someone else lives in the same domestic hell as me. The Husband likes Arctic conditions. I want it tropical.

He spends his days turning the thermostat down, while I sneak around turning it back up. It's THE major source of contention between us. Now I have the solution. Different homes!

I'M PROBABLY being a bit dense here but if Britain and France managed to intercept an alleged Russian "shadow" ship why can't they stop a few flimsy dinghies in the Channel?

A BRUTAL PARK RAPE WHERE THE DEVIL REALLY IS ALL IN THE DETAIL

IF THERE was ever any doubt that Britain's judiciary is on the side of foreign criminals, what about Judge Nirmal Shant who ordered that the asylum seeker status of rapist Sheraz Malik, 28, was NOT to be made public.

This scumbag dragged a vulnerable teenage girl by the hair into a secluded area of a park and raped her – after she'd already been raped by his mate.

In court, Pakistani Malik was asked why he'd done it and said: "What was I supposed to do?" And THAT'S why we should have been told he was a Pakistani asylum seeker. His country of origin and his status are totally relevant to his crime because he's one of the thousands of skanky men being let into Britain from barbaric cultures where women are seen as meat for the taking.

DAILY EXPRESSO DON'T MISS CAROLE MALONE EVERY WEDNESDAY ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL'S DAILY EXPRESSO SHOW ▶

Labour slammed for inaction as yet more banks close

Santander says 44 more of its branches are closing amid a banking exodus from high streets

BY **KATIE ELLIOTT**

LABOUR has been accused of "sitting on its hands" ahead of more mass bank branch closures.

Spanish firm Santander this week confirmed 44 more UK locations would shutter for good this year, putting 291 jobs at risk.

It comes 10 months after the firm announced it was closing 95 branches, in cuts hitting 750 workers.

Last year, NatWest, Halifax, Lloyds, Bank of Scotland, TSB and Barclays closed as many as 432 branches, Which? analysis showed.

Charities have called for action as more pensioners and other digitally excluded groups face barriers to carrying out everyday banking.

Dennis Reed, of the Silver Voices pressure group, said "The government is sitting on its hands as our high streets are denuded of branches.

Sparse

"This is just the latest in a long line of closures intended to force the population on to digital banking and hasten the demise of cash."

Mr Reed added: "Pensioners and other digitally excluded groups are being forced to travel long distances to conduct their everyday banking."

The firms attempted to justify closures, citing reduced footfall as more customers switch to online. Santander this week claimed 96% of all transactions are now completed digitally.

Hubs that allow customers from any bank to conduct everyday banking activities are being set up in areas without a branch.

There are currently 210 across the UK, ATM network Link said. Labour had vowed to roll out 350 by the end of this Parliament.

While the sites have been largely welcomed, it is argued that they are still sparse.

Even among older people who are digitally confident, campaigners warn that "poverty can still be a barrier". Research by Independent Age found 46% of older adults living on a low income have struggled to keep up with their broadband costs.

Morgan Vine, director of policy and influencing at Independent Age, said: "We hear from older people on a low income who are worried about losing access to their branch. Many rely on speaking to someone in person and are unable to bank digitally.

"Phone and data bills, as well as smartphone handsets, can be too expensive for those living on low incomes, and some may be nervous of scams."

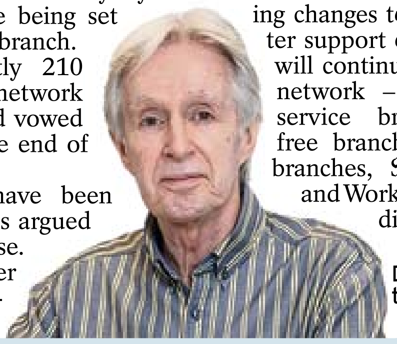
Caroline Abrahams, charity director at Age UK, said: "We know that older people value face-to-face banking as it is a trusted source which also involves conversation and human interaction.

"The ability to manage your own financial affairs in a manner that suits your needs is important for everyone. Without this, many would struggle to stay on top of their finances.

"Age UK is calling for the protection of physical banking services and for the accelerated roll-out of hubs."

A Treasury spokesperson said: "We recognise the vital role face-to-face banking plays for communities, which is why we are working to roll out 350 hubs by the end of this Parliament."

Santander said: "We are making changes to branches to better support our customers. We will continue to invest in our network – comprising full-service branches, counter-free branches, reduced-hour branches, Santander Locals, and Work Cafés – as well as digital banking."



Dennis Reed wants the closures halted

800,000 need to claim pension relief

BY **JONATHAN WALKER**

MORE than 800,000 people may be missing out on hundreds of pounds owed to them by the tax office.

Workers who pay into a personal pension scheme and pay income tax at the 40% higher rate may be eligible to claim pension tax relief.

However, many fail to collect the cash, Freedom of Information requests from Sir Steve Webb, a former pensions minister, showed.

Tax returns are not compulsory for staff whose income tax contributions are taken directly by employers. But savers paying into personal pensions could save money by doing so, Sir Steve said. He added: "Anyone saving into a personal pension or other 'relief at source' scheme can get higher-rate relief - but only if they claim it. It is vital not to ignore the box for personal pension contributions but to enter the gross amount that went in to your pension.

"This should trigger a tax refund of over £1,700 for the higher rate and over £2,000 for the additional rate."

Sir Steve, a partner with finance consultants LCP, said 807,000 higher-rate taxpayers and 19,000 additional-rate payers could be underclaiming.

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No more zeroes

Repair Shop fix for silent electric piano of Stranglers star

The Stranglers in 1988, from left, Dave Greenfield, Jean-Jacques Burnel, Hugh Cornwell and Jet Black

BY **MARK JEFFERIES**

A BROKEN electric piano which belonged to a member of the iconic punk band The Stranglers is brought back to life thanks to The Repair Shop.

The rock ’n’ roll relic was owned by Dave Greenfield who played on the group’s hits such as No More Heroes, Peaches and Golden Brown.

His keyboard work became a signature sound for the chart toppers who were originally fronted by singer Hugh Cornwell and sold more than 40 million records worldwide.

However, Dave died in 2020 from Covid aged 71 and long-term fan and fellow musician Toby Hounsham took his place and still plays with the group today.

He was handed Dave’s original Hohner Cembalet keyboard as a gift from the band but he had never heard it as it no longer worked and could not even sound a note.

Toby brings it to the BBC’s Repair Shop in the hope that they can restore the piece of musical history. He tells woodwork expert Will Kirk and organ restorer Dave Burville: “Dave inspired me to play the keyboards.

“He toured with it for hundreds and hundreds of gigs – hence all these battle scars. Every mark on it tells a story.”

He adds: “I would love to have it in working order so I can play it. I heard it historically on records but I have never heard this keyboard working because unfortunately it is broken.”

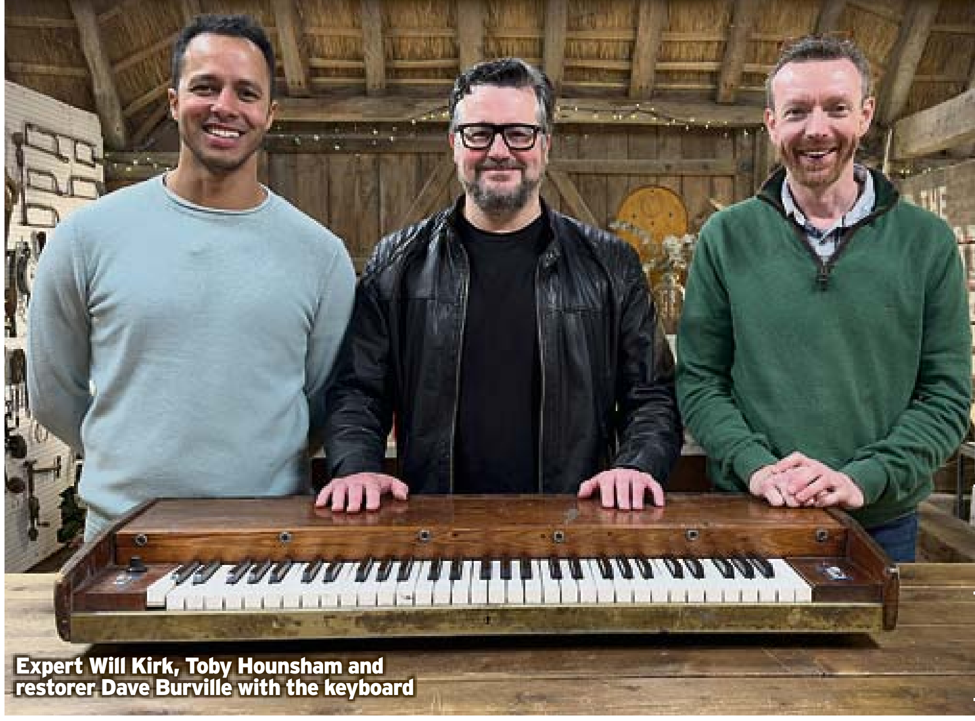
Restorer Dave says: “This is unbelievable. This is history before us.

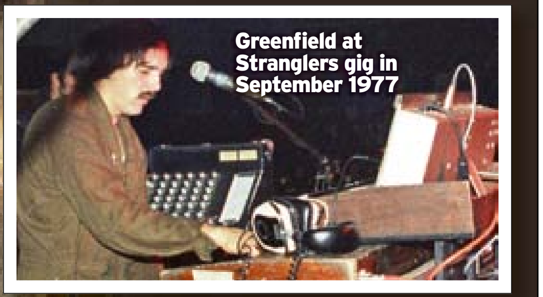
“As a kid I remember listening to records of The Stranglers so I feel really privileged to work on this instrument.”

Following the complete refurbishment, Toby returns to the TV barn and gets emotional as he plays snippets from No More Heroes and Golden Brown on Dave’s original instrument.

He says: “Wow! I’m speechless. That is the sound! This is incredible. You have kept the character perfectly. Dave recorded all those iconic songs and played them live on these keys. I cannot thank you enough. It has blown my mind... I’d like to think Dave would approve.”

● *The Repair Shop, BBC One and iPlayer, airs on Wednesday at 8pm*


Expert Will Kirk, Toby Hounsham and restorer Dave Burville with the keyboard


Greenfield at Stranglers gig in September 1977

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WIN £200 SHOPPING VOUCHERS

10 PRIZES TO BE WON

Are you in need of some extra cash this January? With the Chrismas bills coming in, we could all use some help with our finances. So your favourite newspaper is giving you a helping hand.

We are giving Daily Express readers the chance to win £200 to go towards their shopping bills, and we have 10 prizes up for grabs.

Whether you are paying off your credit cards, or saving for a 2026 getaway, an extra £200 towards your food shop will come in handy at this time of year.

You will be able to stock up on everyday essentials and lots of healthy fresh produce to kick-start your new year healthy eating plan. The £200 shopping voucher is valid in all major supermarkets, so you will be able to use it at your local supermarket.

HOW TO ENTER

Simply visit www.express.co.uk/vouchers and fill in the online form. The competition closes at 23:45pm on Sunday, February 15, 2026. Terms and conditions apply. See online form for details and full t&c's.

SCAN ME

Heading to a dementia care crisis

J I'M NO expert, but I'm pretty sure what the Americans call soccer is what we call football. Football. Not headball, or foot-headball or kick-and-head. Football.

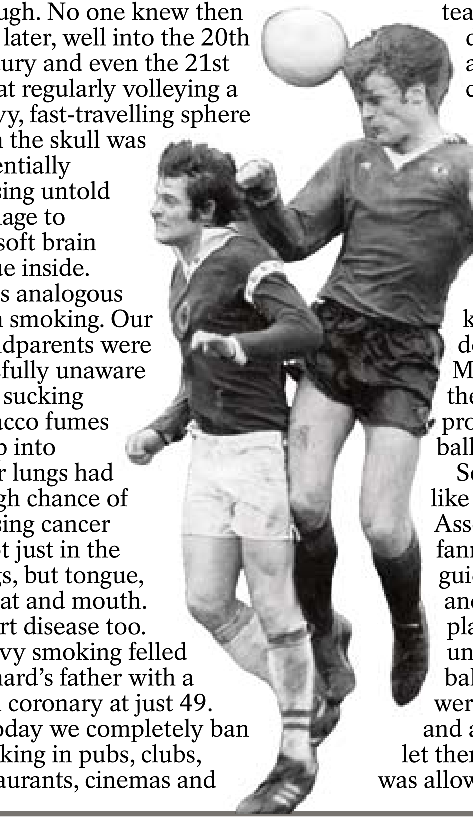
Of course as the game really took off in the 19th century and began to rival cricket as our national sport, heading the ball developed as a way around the rules against handling it. Fair enough. No one knew then – or later, well into the 20th century and even the 21st – that regularly volleying a heavy, fast-travelling sphere with the skull was potentially causing untold damage to the soft brain tissue inside.

It's analogous with smoking. Our grandparents were blissfully unaware that sucking tobacco fumes deep into their lungs had a high chance of causing cancer – not just in the lungs, but tongue, throat and mouth. Heart disease too. Heavy smoking felled Richard's father with a fatal coronary at just 49.

Today we completely ban smoking in pubs, clubs, restaurants, cinemas and theatres, public transport, and many open spaces.

We now know how lethally dangerous cigarettes are.

So what's stopping a ban on heading footballs? It's been 20 years since a coroner said "headers" by West Bromwich Albion's Jeff Astle caused the dementia which killed him at just 59. Since then, there's been case after case after case. Half of England's World Cup-winning team of 1966 died of dementia or other associated neurological conditions. HALF.



This week, yet another coroner linked heading with catastrophic brain injury: he ruled it likely contributed to the dementia that killed former Scotland defender Gordon McQueen, left, heading the ball. (McQueen was a prolific header of the ball). Of COURSE it did.

So can organisations like the Football Association please stop fannying around with guidelines and warnings and merely banning players aged 11 and under from heading the ball? (If my three boys were still in their teens and at school, I'd refuse to let them play at all if heading was allowed).

R IT'S been a while since the Tories were described as the "nasty" party. People forget it was actually a Conservative who coined the slogan – Theresa May in 2002. As the party's first woman chairman, she used the phrase in a speech to warn that the Tories' public image was of hostility to vulnerable people.

Flash-forward to this week and Conservative Party Central Office's appalling slur on former Home Secretary Suella Braverman after she announced her defection from the Tories to Reform.

In a hastily-withdrawn statement, Tory HQ said that Braverman had been "very unhappy" and the party had done all it could "to look after her mental health". The aspersion was unmistakable. Braverman was flaky. Unreliable. Damaged goods. Mentally unwell.

It was disgraceful. But to her credit, she rose above it, telling a hastily-convened press conference: "Those attacks say more about them than they do me... it's a bit pathetic, really. I'm not going to dignify it [with any further comment]." The spin doctor who dipped into the sewer for that smear should be made to clean the toilets at Central Office for a spell. Appropriate, no?

Richard&Judy

BRITAIN'S BEST-LOVED HUSBAND AND WIFE TEAM REFLECT ON THE WEEK'S EVENTS EVERY SATURDAY IN YOUR DAILY EXPRESS

J SO, breakfast show weather legend Carol Kirkwood is following me into TV retirement. All I can say is: "Come on in, Carol – the water's lovely!" Carol announced on Tuesday morning that she would be leaving BBC Breakfast after more than a quarter of a century. Blinking back tears, Carol explained that she wants to spend more time with her new(ish) husband, policeman Steve Randall (the couple married at the end of 2023) and to write more novels (she's already published five books so far). I, and your many fans, wish you the happiest of semi-retirements, Carol. But BOY, are we gonna miss that sunny smiling face in the mornings!

Dispute borders on the disastrous

R ONE of the commonest letters I'm sent in my other newspaper role as an agony uncle comes from people with "neighbour problems".

It's astonishing how full-blown feuds can blow up over the most trivial issues with the folks next door. Otherwise sensible, mature men and women display toddler tantrums worthy of a five-year-old.

A stray rose stem growing a few inches over the "wrong" side of the garden fence... a car parked a couple of centimetres into someone's driveway entrance... rubbish bins put out "too early" on shared pavement space (in that particular complainant's case, "too early" was an hour before midnight the day before collection).

I always counsel common sense and conciliation, because these things can spiral completely out of control. This week, a Dorset pensioner was evicted – EVICTED – from her home after losing a five-year battle over a 1ft-wide strip of land. Yup, you read that right. One. Foot. Less than the length of a Wellington boot.

Jenny Field, 77, is the newly homeless one. She's been locked in dispute since 2020 with next door neighbour Pauline Clark, 64, over the boundary between their bungalows.

A petty row with a neighbour cost Dorset woman Jenny Field her home

It all started when Mrs Field unilaterally demolished a wooden fence she decided had been erected 12 inches onto her property.

An outraged Mrs Clark took Mrs Field to court and won. Mrs Field was ordered to pay £21,000, which covered the cost of the demolished fence plus two-thirds of her neighbour's legal fees.

She stubbornly refused to comply, the case went back to court, the legal bill rocketed to £113,000, Mrs Field remained defiant, and an exasperated judge finally ordered her eviction so her little home could be sold to cover the ballooning debt. It was all very unpleasant in that usually serene Dorset cul-de-sac on Monday. Mrs Field, defiant to the last, refused to open the door to the bailiffs, shouting at them to "go away". They summoned a locksmith to use an electric saw to carve their way in.

Mrs Field emerged in slippers to remonstrate with the bailiffs, and that was that. They refused her re-entry. Game over.

All over a tiny strip of land and head-high wooden fence.

A cautionary tale if ever there was one. If any of you reading this have locked horns with your neighbour over an issue that most sane observers would unhesitatingly describe as trivial, I urge you to pause and reflect. Is it really worth all that angst, raised blood pressure and legal expense?

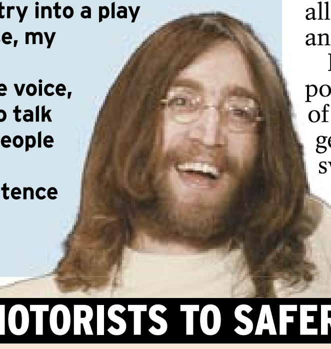
Might it not be a wiser strategy to pop next door with a decent bottle of wine, a bunch of flowers, and a generous compromise? Both sides swallowing their pride along with the sauvignon?

Make peace, not war. Love thy neighbour. Don't wind up like Jenny Field has.

R MUCH is still being written about John Lennon barely a month after the 45th anniversary of his death. I found a fresh Lennon aphorism this week. The man was SO dry. Sir Laurence Olivier was discussing adapting Lennon's surreal poetry into a play and suddenly, haughtily, informed him: "Of course, my theatre will own 60% of the film rights!"

The Beatle didn't blink. In that deadpan Scouse voice, he droned: "Don'tcha have people that you pay to talk about these kinds of things who can talk to the people that I pay to talk about these kinds of things?"

A witness to the exchange said later: "The sentence came out like ticker-tape! Olivier was floored!" Lennon, right, would be 85 now. Still missed.



STEERING YOUNG MOTORISTS TO SAFER DRIVING

Changes have been well thought-through

J THREE cheers for Northern Ireland's decision to bring in new rules for freshly-qualified young drivers. The restrictions are sensible, thought-through and long overdue. The sooner the rest of the UK follows suit, the better.

We all know that young drivers – particularly juvenile males – can be extraordinarily reckless and impulsive.

A lot of that is down to peer pressure to show off in front of a carload of mates, especially late at night. So they speed and take insane risks. Accidents literally waiting to happen.

The new rules, which kick in this autumn, are mostly aimed at 17 to 23-year-olds.

They include a six-month wait for learner drivers before taking the full on-the-road practical test, and newly qualified drivers up to the age of 24 will only be allowed to carry ONE passenger aged between 14 and 20 between 11pm and 6am.

Anyone caught flouting the rules gets three points on their licence and a fine of up to £1,000.

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Give hero Jim a fitting farewell

Tribute push for D-Day hero

BY **JAMES PODESTA**

FAMILY of one of the last surviving D-Day veterans have appealed for mourners to give him a fitting farewell after his death at the age of 99.

Jim Justice volunteered to fight for his country at 17 without telling his parents and a year later crossed the Channel for the pivotal landings on June 6, 1944.

His mother Ellen was so upset to learn that he would be fighting overseas at such a young age that she wrote to her MP to see if they could intervene.

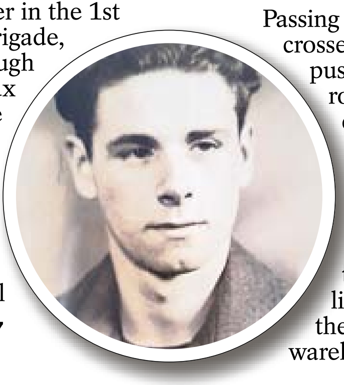
Her son recalled the sight of half-submerged tanks and floating bodies as he landed at Gold Beach in Normandy.

Jim, an anti-tank gunner in the 1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade, advanced through Arromanches and Bayeux and helped take the German-occupied village of Villers-Bocage on the road to Caen.

The Nazis launched a fierce counter-attack which Jim and his colleagues managed to repel in a costly action. They proceeded through northern France, holding the line and leading the advance.

Their efforts in the second half of 1944 liberated towns and villages throughout Belgium and Holland.

He and the fellow troops were met with citizens waving flags and singing God Save The King in appreciation.



Jim Justice volunteered at 17 without telling his parents

Proud

Passing into Germany, Jim crossed the Rhine in the final push and witnessed the horrors of the Belsen-Bergen concentration camp in Lower Saxony which he helped liberate.

He remained in the army of occupation in Germany until 1947, then returned to civilian life in Britain to work in the print industry as a warehouseman in Crawley, West Sussex. Jim was awarded France's top honour Legion D'Honneur in 2017 and returned to Normandy for the 80th anniversary D-Day commemorations in June 2024 where he met the Queen and other royals.

Last year, he was invited to Westminster Abbey to attend the 80th anniversary VE Day service.

Jim, who is survived by his wife of 72 years Joy, died at his care home in New Milton, Hants, on January 10.

Serving soldiers, military veterans and the wider community are invited to attend his funeral at New Forest Crematorium on Monday at noon.

Daughter Christine Derrington said: "Dad would have been 100 on February 13 and we had already arranged a big party but he didn't quite make it.

"We are all incredibly proud of him. Growing up, he was very private about the war but when he reached 60 he started to talk more about it.

"He was a very unassuming man with no airs and graces about him."

Jim Justice at commemorative event and, left, meeting Queen Camilla

Maternity claims drive £4bn NHS bill for negligence

BY **JONATHAN WALKER**
Whitehall Editor

THE annual cost of clinical negligence cases in the health service is set to reach £4billion, thanks in part to "problems with maternity care" that leave children with severe injuries.

An inquiry by MPs warned the rising costs "divert vital resources away from our frontline health services".

The Commons public accounts committee said: "Behind these costs lie many tragic incidents of patient harm, with recent increases in damages being largely driven by a small number of high-value maternity cases each year."

A report published by the committee said: "The Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England have so far failed to take any meaningful steps to tackle the rising costs." Clinical negligence in the health service is defined as a breach of a legal duty of care which directly caused harm to the patient.

The annual cost of settling such claims has more than tripled in real terms since 2006-7, to reach £3.6bn in 2024-25.

The committee said: "Forecasts suggest that the cost of clinical negligence will continue to rise substantially in coming years, with annual payments expected to exceed £4bn by 2029-30."

MPs also criticised the Department of Health's "failure to address problems with maternity care in England", saying the cost of claims involving children had increased significantly. In 2024-25, £1.5bn was spent on claims involving brain injury at birth. The committee also highlighted warnings from the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists that maternity departments are struggling with a growing number of complex births requiring medical intervention, such as a caesarean section. Reasons include more women giving birth at an older age and higher levels of obesity.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting last year ordered an inquiry into maternity services.

A Department of Health spokesman said the government is taking "rapid action to strengthen patient safety" including new hospital league tables. "We have also brought in new maternity safety measures, are conducting an urgent investigation of failings and are establishing a taskforce, so every mother can have confidence in NHS care once again," he added.

Wes Streeting ordered a probe

Couple to sue clinic over 'embryo error'

BY **CHRISTOPHER BUCKTIN**

A WHITE couple are suing a fertility clinic over an alleged error that led to the birth of a "non-Caucasian child" who is not biologically related to them.

Tiffany Score and Steven Mills say the wrong embryo was implanted into her uterus last April.

The parents say they realised something was wrong when the baby "displayed the physical appearance of a racially non-Caucasian child".

Genetic tests proved the newborn girl had no genetic relationship to either of them. The couple's lawyer, John Scarola, demanded the Fertility Centre of Orlando in Florida reunite the baby, born on December 11, with her real parents.

The couple fear another patient may have been implanted with their embryo. They are willing to bring the child up, but Mr Scarola added: "Their concern is someone could show up at any time and claim the baby."

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DELAY TO LAW PROSCRIBING IRGC

Plea to speed up Iran ban

Anti-government demonstrations in central Tehran; inset, Ali Khamenei

BY **MICHAEL KNOWLES**
Home Affairs Editor

LABOUR is under mounting pressure to proscribe the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terror group over its extreme response to protests against the regime.

The number of people killed is 6,126 – with 5,777 of them protesters – according to the US-based group Human Rights Activists in Iran.

But the UK is unlikely to ban the IRGC – part of Iran's armed forces – any time soon, with sources saying a law will only be brought forward "when Parliamentary time allows".

The EU, US, Canada and Australia have already put the IRGC on their terror lists.

Affront

In Britain, Lord Blunkett became the most senior Labour grandee to call for a ban when he said on Thursday night: "I am totally in favour of proscribing the IRGC and, for that matter, the Muslim Brotherhood.

"I hope very much that in the spirit of the way in which the new Home Secretary [Shabana Mahmood] has tackled other issues, she will be prepared to act on both of these."

Shadow Foreign Secretary Dame Priti Patel said: "The brutality of the Tehran regime is an affront to humanity. Thousands slaughtered, many more injured and tortured... the Labour government's silence on the IRGC is appalling."

Jonathan Hall KC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, said current laws were unsuitable for countering the threats posed by Iran, Russia and China.

Sir Keir Starmer said: "It is long-standing practice under successive governments that we don't speculate about individual sanctions targets."

'SECURITY FORCES OPENED FIRE ON WOMEN, MEN, CHILDREN AND ELDERLY'

EXCLUSIVE

BY **RICHARD ASHMORE**

EYEWITNESSES to the Iranian protests have claimed security forces fired at children, women and the elderly.

They said demonstrators have been shot and killed in the capital Tehran with bodies "disappearing from hospitals".

Shocked witnesses have told how authorities fired on "everyone indiscriminately" not caring if they hit "women, men, children or the elderly".

The protests, over Iran's deepening economic and labour crises under Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, have reportedly led to the deaths of at least 6,000 people since late December.

Protesters have claimed tear gas and chemicals were used to disperse crowds of demonstrators, with live ammunition, pellet guns and paintball guns also used.

A 30-year-old musician from Tehran said "everyone was happy" when the protests began in the hope they might succeed.

She said many people responded to a call to action from the Crown Prince of Iran Reza Pahlavi, who lives in exile in America.

His father the Shah was deposed in the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

She said: "When Reza Pahlavi called for peaceful protest, the youngest people in the family, a 14-year-old girl and an 18-year-old boy, said that they would join. So, the other family members decided to go with them.

"On the night of the call, they decided to go to a protest in another district, thinking it might be safer. They chose a district in northern Tehran that was far from their own.

"When they got there, they saw many families who had heeded the call together.

"But the repressive forces began to shoot at people with weapons of war.

"They were shooting directly at heads, not legs, and didn't hesitate to shoot at women and the young, even juveniles or kids. Many people died on the spot."

She added that those who escaped the bullets now feel "useless" because "they are not in prison or are still alive".

A 19-year-old woman, who lives in central Tehran, joined the protests on January 8. She said: "Tear gas and smoke filled the air. The crowd had turned into a flood.

"Suddenly, from an upper street came the sound of intense, sustained gunfire, and a huge wave of people ran towards us. Out of fear of being shot, my sister and I ran too until we reached an intersection. We stopped there and continued chanting.

"Then, suddenly, forces closed in from multiple directions, including behind us, firing heavily. It was unbelievable!

"I saw people shot in the legs, blood pouring out, while others tried to bandage their wounds or help them escape.

"Two of our friends were shot. One was hit with pellets and still has them lodged in the back of his legs and body."

A 27-year-old shop assistant who took part in the demonstrations said: "There were women and even elderly individuals walking with canes or walkers.

"When the repression forces attacked, they targeted everyone indiscriminately.

"It didn't matter whether you were a woman, man, child or elderly person.

"My friend's brother was killed in eastern Tehran. A bullet hit his head while his sister and girlfriend were with him. The bullet was fired directly at him by the security forces.

"His body disappeared at the hospital, and the next morning his family identified it at Kahrizak Forensic Medicine Centre."

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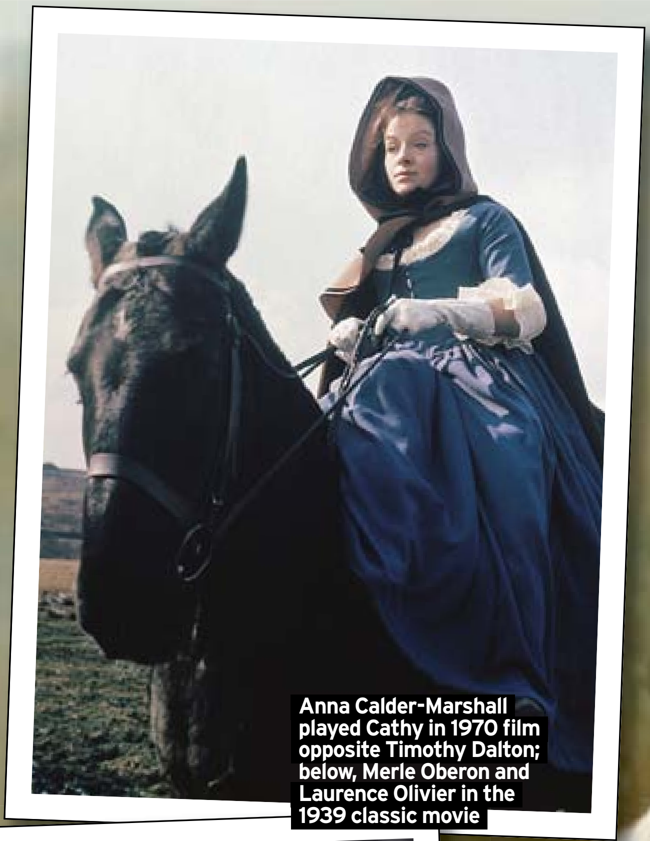
CATHY'S COME

As Emerald Fennell's Gen Z reimagining of Wuthering Heights arrives on screen, starring Margot Robbie, novelist ESSIE FOX reflects on Emily Bronte's gothic masterpiece and why it inspires so many retellings



Anna Calder-Marshall played Cathy in 1970 film opposite Timothy Dalton; below, Merle Oberon and Laurence Olivier in the 1939 classic movie

DESPITE being written nearly 200 years ago, Wuthering Heights is still being read and loved. And now, it's finding even more fans, with a resurgence of interest due to the release of Emerald Fennell's big-screen version in time for Valentine's Day – which is coincidentally the same time my own novel, Catherine: A Retelling of Wuthering Heights, is published.

Fennell's film will be the latest in a long line of adaptations for both the big and small screen, and all of them with unique visions of Emily Brontë's own creation. The original mannered and sanitised Hollywood version made in 1939 showed the gritty gothic novel as a sweeping romance, with less focus on the scenes of brutality and trauma that are present in the book.

At least the 2011 version, directed by Andrea Arnold, showed the character of Heathcliff as racially abused as a person of colour – this "difference" being one of the novel's central themes. From his first introduction in the pages of the book, Heathcliff is portrayed as the frightened orphaned child who Cathy's father saved from the streets of Liverpool.

Various characters then describe him as being "dark as the devil", a "swarthy gipsy", a "black villain", or "a foreign castaway". However, there are also more exotic images, with Nelly Dean (the main narrator, and once housekeeper at the Heights) referring to Heathcliff as being handsome, with black eyes that are flashing with fire; even suggesting that his father was the Emperor of China, and his mother had perhaps been an Indian queen.

The novel never reveals the truth of Heathcliff's birth.

But his otherness does lead to his cruel isolation, and an obsession with revenge when the love of his life chooses to marry someone else. In her rash naivety, Cathy truly believes she can have her cake and eat it, walking out on the arm of her wealthy "golden" husband while keeping Heathcliff as her lover. She has no idea of the misery and pain that her actions will cause.

How far will Emerald Fennell go when exploring the truth of Heathcliff's origins, and what he does in the three years when he leaves Wuthering Heights, before returning a rich man obsessed with stealing Cathy back from the husband he hates?

One thing is for sure, the run of teasing trailers already released have caused some heated discussions on social media. Those less familiar with the book express excitement at what promises to be the whirling chaos of a stylised romance. Those who know it somewhat better are perhaps less convinced.

It is true that some bold choices have been made with the casting, one of the main ones being Cathy, who is dark-haired and just 18 when she dies in the book, whereas her image in this film is fair-haired and more mature. When it comes to the costumes, from a purist's point of view they are wrong for the era – which is the late 1700s.

Author Essie Fox's retelling is told from Cathy's perspective

Although the scenes on the moors look authentically wild, some of the views of Thrushcross Grange, where Cathy lives when she weds, are so luridly designed they could well have been lifted from the Mad Hatter's Tea Party in Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland.

Does Fennell want us to be shocked – to view the story through a luridly psychedelic lens and that way heighten the gothic and erotic qualities as Cathy descends into madness and despair?

Fennell has said in interviews that this film reflects the vision she imagined when she first read Wuthering Heights at the age of 14 – whereas my own introduction was when I was six or seven, when my mother and I spent one winter Sunday afternoon, hearing the wind and the rain thrashing loudly on the windows, while immersed in the melodramatic old black-and-white film.

I MAY have been much too young to comprehend the sexual tension, but could Laurence Olivier be more broodingly romantic? And Merle Oberon so beguiling as Cathy?

Oh, how desolate I felt when the two of them had died and the ghosts of the doomed lovers disappeared into the snow drifting down across the moors. Like

HOME

Margot Robbie, main and top right, appears as a blonde Cathy in Emerald Fennell's retelling of the classic Wuthering Heights

Fennell, I first read the novel in my teens and was entirely caught up in the simmering doomed passion, weeping for hours when Cathy died, but really having little interest in the characters whose lives carried on afterwards.

But the genius of this novel is how it changes with each reading, depending on age and life experience. As well as depicting a bond that transcends death and the grave, it is the starkest portrayal of life's brutalities and hardships, with an acute understanding of how abuse and grief in childhood can corrupt an adult psyche.

Now I see Cathy's fall into a chasm of despair. I see Heathcliff as a man warped by hatred and revenge, intent on the sadistic destruction of the families he views as instrumental in the ruin of his life. And I can now appreciate the synergy that exists between the novel's two halves, and how the second generation provides the mirror to reflect all the wrongs of the past.

But will it put those wrongs to right?

Ultimately, this is a story of redemption, and in my own retelling I have focussed on the aspect that so obsessed me as a child – the story of a ghost.

What if Heathcliff does raise the spirit of the woman who's already been dead for more than 18 years when he desecrates her grave to hold her in his arms again?

What would that ghost recall of the life she'd known before, with all the intimate scenes that the maid, Nelly Dean, was never present to see? What would my Catherine hope to do when she observes the wickedness of the boy she once adored, comparing him with the man now intent on the destruction of the daughter who was born on the day when she died?

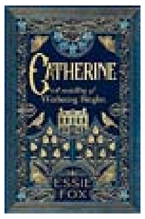
And what would she feel, when she saw her daughter's fate – now imprisoned and the victim of so much cruelty?

Have I dared to be as bold as Emerald Fennell? Perhaps not visually, because I've done my very best to be true to the era, to the language and dress, and the settings of the book.

BUT I have conjured new scenes – and whatever I've imagined as hidden between the lines, no one could deny that Emily Brontë's gothic novel is a cauldron of passion, of jealousy, and madness. It is a novel that has had the power to shock, not only today but since the time of its creation, with many early critics calling it scandalous – suggesting that with such immoral characters, it should never have been published.

To my mind it is the depth of Emily's understanding of the good and the bad that can exist in every soul, that makes her story so profound and still relevant today. Cathy and Heathcliff are not sanitised ideals as I imagined them at first in that old black-and-white film.

They are flawed, and they are real. Real to such an extent that they seem to exist beyond the pages of the book. It is as if we're looking through a mirror where the glass is wavering and strange. I can only hope my readers enjoy the mirror I've held up, showing Catherine as a ghost. She haunts my dreams to this day. I believe she always will.



● *Catherine: A Retelling of Wuthering Heights, by Essie Fox (Orenda Books, £20) is published on February 12*

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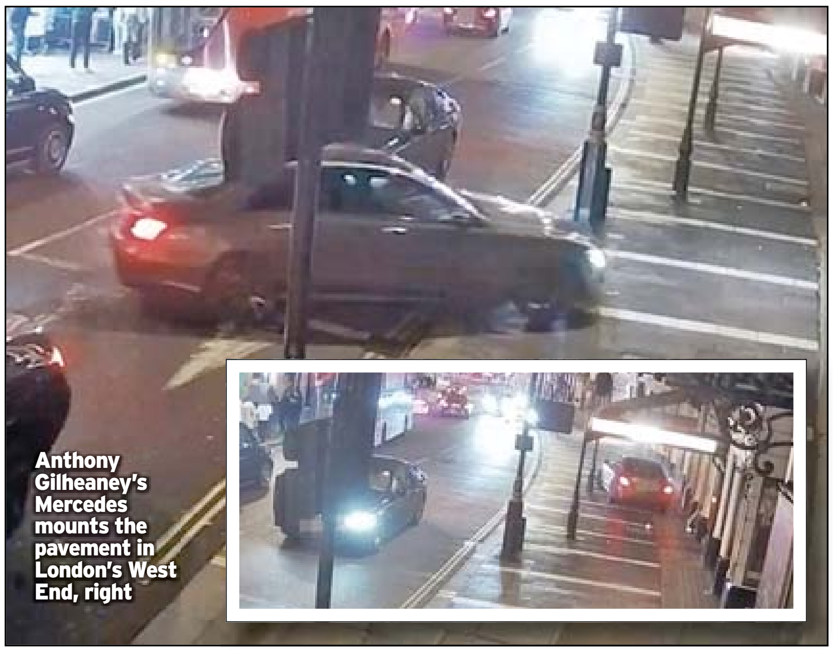


Anthony Gilheaney's Mercedes mounts the pavement in London's West End, right

37 years for killing man in rampage

Life for West End murder

BY **ELLIE CRABBE**

Gilheaney was racist and homophobic

A DRIVER who deliberately mowed down five people – killing one – in a racist and homophobic rampage on Christmas Day has been jailed for at least 37 years.

Drunk Anthony Gilheaney, 32, was convicted of murdering Aidan Chapman, 25, with his high-powered Mercedes in 2024.

The Old Bailey heard Gilheaney emerged from a nightclub in the early hours, argued with one stranger, punched another then attacked Hardeep Singh, a Sikh man, who was walking along Shaftesbury Avenue in London's West End.

He returned to his car and shouted a racist slur at pedestrian Arif Khan, who went to confront him.

Gilheaney reversed, knocking Mr Khan to the ground. He got out the car, threw his victim to the ground and began kicking him.

At this point, first victim Mr Singh returned with friends and beat up the defendant. Gilheaney again returned to his car, rammed an Uber vehicle and drove up and down the street, mounting the kerb and sending pedestrians fleeing. He targeted Dr Marcelo Basbus-Garcia and his partner Miguel Waihrich, who were holding hands.

Gilheaney then ploughed into Mr Chapman and his friend Tyrone Itorho.

Mr Chapman was hit full-on, suffering catastrophic brain damage, and died in hospital on New Year's Eve.

Police spotted Gilheaney's erratic driving and gave chase but he got away and was later found passed out in Holborn. Jurors at his trial in December also found him guilty of attempting to murder Dr Basbus-Garcia and Mr Itorho, and wounding Mr Khan with intent.

Gilheaney, of Harlow, Essex, was cleared of attempting to murder Mr Waihrich but was convicted of causing him grievous bodily harm with intent. He admitted causing death by driving, dangerous driving and possessing a blade. Mr Chapman's father Darren told yesterday's sentencing hearing at the Old Bailey: "Anthony Gilheaney is a monster."

Aidan Chapman was out with pal

Dr Basbus-Garcia, who was left needing a cane to walk, said: "I thought I was going to die – the driver had no mercy."

His chef partner Mr Waihrich may never be able to work again.

Gilheaney never held a driving licence but used a number of aliases and clocked up 40 previous convictions from the age of 14.

Sentencing him, Mrs Justice McGowan said: "He holds deeply racist attitudes towards Asian members of the public."

29 years' jail for migrant hotel dancing murderer

BY **STEPHANIE WAREHAM**

A "DEMONIC, inhuman" Sudanese asylum seeker has been jailed for life for the brutal murder of a young mum who worked at his migrant hotel.

Deng Chol Majek is thought to have entered Britain by small boat less than three months before his frenzied assault on Rhiannon Whyte, 27.

The crazed killer stabbed Rhiannon 23 times with a screwdriver at Bescot Stadium station, Walsall, in 2024.

Majek had tracked her to a platform after she finished a shift at the Park Inn hotel, where he had been living. She suffered 19 wounds to her head, including a fatal brain stem injury.

He was seen dancing with other residents in the car park after the killing and in a hotel corridor.

He showed no emotion as Rhiannon's devastated sister Alex addressed him directly in court, saying she was speaking on "behalf of me and my broken-hearted siblings Emma, Daniel and Cara, and Rhiannon's two nieces and seven nephews. Most importantly for her now six-year-old son".

'You brutalised her then partied. You might as well have danced on her grave'

She said Majek carried out a "vicious and pitiless assault on a terrified and defenceless young woman", adding: "I honestly feel that calling you demonic and inhuman is justifiable in the circumstances.

"You brutalised Rhiannon and then partied as if nothing had happened. You celebrated. You might as well have danced on her grave."

Her mum, Donna, said: "Let me see you dancing now."

She added: "Her name will not be forgotten… We will keep her alive in our memory. You, however, are an evil nightmare that will be put aside, known only for your cruel, malicious act. By the grace of God, I hope you never see the outside world again."

Murdered Rhiannon, above, will not be forgotten, said her mum Donna, below

Murderer Deng Chol Majek, below, was caught on CCTV dancing down a hotel corridor after killing

CCTV shown at the Wolverhampton crown court trial showed he disappeared from view on the deserted platform for 90 seconds just after 11pm to attack Rhiannon, whose son was then aged five. She died in hospital three days later, after being found injured by the driver and guard of a train that arrived five minutes later.

Jurors unanimously convicted Majek of murder and possessing a screwdriver as an offensive weapon. He had lied about his age, the court heard, claiming to be 19 despite a date of birth recorded after a failed asylum bid in Germany putting him at 27.

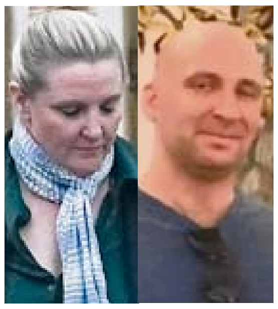
Rhiannon's family arrived at Coventry crown court for the sentencing in T-shirts with her photo on them as crowds waved England flags.

The trial had heard Majek had been reported to hotel security after "spookily" staring at three female staff members for prolonged periods.

Defence KC Gurdeep Garcha said his client continued to deny he was the killer and never offered a motive.

Jailing Majek for life, with a minimum of 29 years, Mr Justice Soole told him he had brought "devastation" to Rhiannon's family, adding: "I am sure that your intent was to kill."

Meanwhile, Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp said the murder was the "consequence of mass illegal migration", and that Majek would not have been in the UK if Labour had not scrapped the Rwanda migrant deportation scheme.



Col Shepherd and Webber

Two officers facing court martial over Army suicide

BY **ROD MINCHIN**

THE family of a 19-year-old soldier who took her own life after being sexually assaulted by a superior have told of their "exhausting" fight for the Army to change.

They spoke out as it emerged senior officers Major James Hook and Colonel Samantha Shepherd are facing a court martial over their handling of Gunner Jaysley Beck's case.

She was found hanged at Larkhill Camp, Wilts, in 2021, five months after being sexually assaulted by ex-senior non-commissioned officer Michael Webber, 42, who was jailed for six months last year.

Gunner Beck told her superiors of the incident but it was not reported to police. Webber wrote a letter of apology to Gunner Beck and was later promoted.

Gunner Jaysley Beck, 19

Gunner Beck's inquest found that her ordeal and the Army's failure to take appropriate action "more than minimally" contributed to her death.

The Ministry of Defence confirmed two people had now been charged with offences relating to "conduct prejudicial to good order and service discipline".

Gunner Beck's mum Leighann McCready said her family was relieved two individuals have been charged.

But she added: "We remain very unhappy with other parts of the Army's response. We were promised a new independent complaints process. We have heard nothing further. We feel constantly as though we have to push the Army to change, and it is completely exhausting."

Killer who left girlfriend to die gets 16 years

Zhe Wang was stabbed and strangled

BY **JACK HUDSON**

AN American student who strangled and fatally stabbed his girlfriend after she accused him of giving her a sexually transmitted infection has been jailed for at least 16 years.

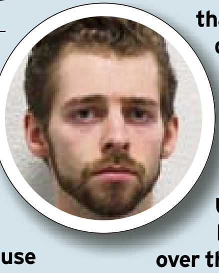
Zhe Wang, 31, was found dead in her bedroom with two knife wounds to the face. She could have survived but her body was not found for three hours.

Wealthy killer Joshua Michals, 26, went home, rang his father and got details of solicitors before calling an ambulance. He told emergency services there had been a "knife incident" at her flat in Hither Green, South East London, on March 20, 2024.

When police arrived he told them: "It's not what it seems." The prosecutor said Ms Wang would have been alive for 30 to 60 minutes after the attack. Asked why he did not call 999 earlier, Michals, inset, said: "I wasn't ready for it and I didn't see the rush."

The students had been seeing each other for six months but had sex only once, a month earlier, because of Ms Wang's high standards of cleanliness. Ms Wang had insisted on seeing Michals' STI test results before the encounter but he sent her old results with the date removed.

She had taken the morning-after pill and became concerned about a rash which may have been a side affect. Ms Wang told Michals she would rather die than get an infection and demanded he take another test. When Michals refused, she accused him of ruining her life and threatened to ask Goldsmiths University for help.



In a bid to smooth things over the MA film student took food to Ms Wang's flat but a row broke out and he launched his fatal attack.

He claimed self defence but was convicted of murder at the Old Bailey.

Judge Richard Marks said: "You believed her to be dead and yet callously took absolutely no steps to check her pulse or try to revive her, nor did you call emergency services."

Public get behind appeal and petition for bus driver

BY **JAMES MANNING**

THOUSANDS of pounds have been raised for a bus driver after he was sacked for chasing down a thief who stole a passenger's necklace.

Mark Hehir, 62, returned the jewellery but the thug came back and punched him, so he hit him back and restrained him for half an hour until police arrived.

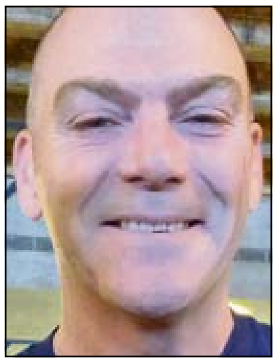
But he lost his job in north-west London – and an employment tribunal – with bus firm Metroline claiming he had used an "excessive use of force".

However, he has been hailed a "hero" by many, including Henry Goff, who set up a GoFundMe appeal – raising £5,500 in the first day.

Meanwhile, the Shadow Justice Secretary has started an online petition to reinstate Mark, which has been signed by 8,000 so far.

Dr Kieran Mullan said: "Ludicrously, one of Metroline's concerns was that the robber was a 'customer'...

"People doing the right thing, for the right reasons when so many look the other way, need our support – not the rule book being thrown at them."



Mark Hehir tackled robber

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BY **JACKIE ANNETT**

TERRY Wogan's gentle Irish voice and personal warmth made millions of listeners feel like he was a dear friend and earned him the admiration of his peers. His colleagues remember him fondly, with Zoe Ball once describing him as a family member.

And from today, to mark 10 years since Sir Terry's death, aged 77, on January 31, 2016, a special tribute to the star, presented by Zoe, will be available on BBC Sounds.

Wogan: In His Own Words centres on an interview with the radio and Eurovision legend at the height of his fame in the 1980s, in which he reflects on everything from his family to his career.

First broadcast in 2022 to mark 50 years since his first BBC breakfast show, it included a host of celebrity tributes. The new, enhanced version, includes fresh words from Zoe, who was hosting the Radio 1 breakfast show in the late 90s while Terry presented his Radio 2 morning show.

She says: "Terry was the greatest of all time. I, like everyone else, absolutely adored him. He made every listener feel he was talking just to them. So naturally gifted, hilarious, naughty, inclusive and he had such empathy."

One contributor back in 2022 was rival DJ Chris Moyles, whose Radio 1 show pulled in around 7.2 million listeners, but was trumped by Wake Up to Wogan on Radio 2, which had around 8.1 million.

In a speech at Terry's induction into the Radio Academy's Hall of Fame in 2009, Chris, now 51, said: "The reason Terry Wogan is brilliant is because he's Terry Wogan and no one else is Terry Wogan. Terry Wogan is brilliant at being Terry Wogan."

Terry would tease him on air to "do his best" to catch up, to which he responded that he would "tear that wig off his head".

Chris said afterwards he "took his life in his hands" with his comments.

But he was right – Wogan's greatest asset was being himself.

Alan Dedicoat, 71, the newsreader on Wake up with Wogan for 17 years, confirms the beloved broadcaster's authenticity.

He says: "The first thing Terry said to me was, 'I'm not getting up at 5:30 in the morning not to have a laugh, we've got to have fun'.

"He made people laugh. He made me laugh. He was never, ever in a bad mood or grumpy in the morning. Some mornings he'd feel a little bit better than others because, well, he was quite the bon viveur.

"He liked nice food and fine wines, and maybe he'd come in one morning, not feeling 100%, but he never showed it.

"And as soon as the microphone was switched on, he said, 'Dr Footlights takes over.' And that was the case.

"He loved the microphone and he loved the reaction he got from the audience. He once said, 'I work to live. I don't live to work'."

Singer Michael Ball, 63, enjoyed sharing brandy and cigars with Terry and bonded over a mutual love of rugby. He remembers: "He was everyone's friend.

"He was a decent, good, hardworking, intelligent, funny, strong man and he brought so much sunshine into our lives. You'd get up in the morning and think, 'oh, here we go.' Stick

Wogan & Ball in 1998 and, below, Dermot O'Leary

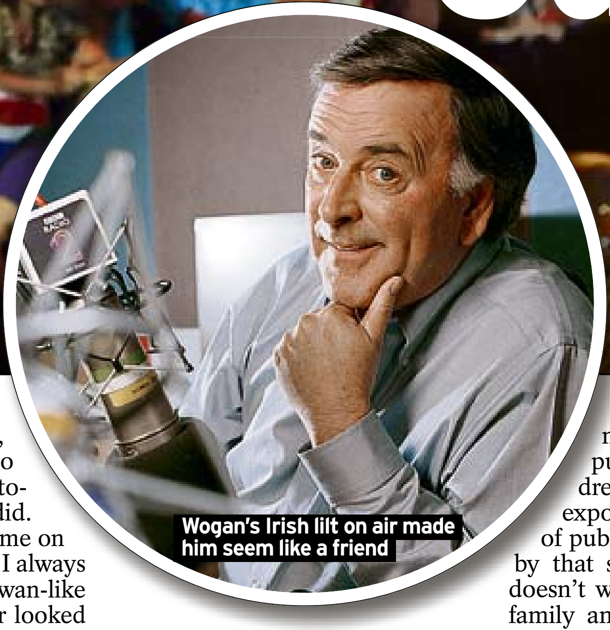
Friend Ken Bruce and, above, Claudia Winkleman

Woga did his best to keep his family out the limelight

Michael Ball bonded with Terry

He made us feel better ...that's all you can ask

Singer Michael Ball and friends on why radio DJ and TV presenter was loved by the nation



Wogan's Irish lilt on air made him seem like a friend

Terry on. You'd feel better. He made us feel better, and that's all you can ask of someone."

Dermot O'Leary, 52, said Terry – who was knighted in 2005 – gave him great advice at a Radio 2 Christmas party early in his career, encouraging him to "never be afraid of the silence".

He first encountered the star when he visited the BBC for a live edition of BBC One's Wogan as a child.

Dermot remembers: "We went down to see Terry and he nonchalantly strolled through the theatre, through the back of the stalls.

"My mum just asked him for an autograph before the show. And he had this kind of half a glass of like a goblet of red wine, which he asked my mum to hold while he did the autograph, which she dutifully did.

"And then he just patted me on the head and I was smitten. I always looked up to Terry for the swan-like grace that he had. He never looked like he tried too hard."

CLAUDIA Winkleman, 54, who co-hosted Children in Need with Terry, says: "You sensed when he was talking to anybody – whether it was somebody on the radio, whether it was a mega star, or whether it was a listener – that he was genuinely interested in their story."

The special broadcast features a rare insight into how the popular star – who died from prostate cancer – managed his family life.

In a chat with Mike Debens in 1980, Terry says: "They didn't choose to be in this business. They have enough to put up with being my children, or my wife, without exposing them to a great deal of publicity. Hardly a week goes by that some woman's magazine doesn't want to do pictures of the family and the house and all the rest, and I try to ration it to maybe one a year, two a year. That's part of the price you pay, but your family shouldn't have to pay."

Close friend and colleague Ken Bruce, 74, recalls Terry fiercely guarding his family's privacy.

He says: "He kept them both [work and family] entirely separate, pretty much. He protected the kids when they were younger. He was very careful about keeping them and his wife Helen out of things."

Terry, who won 10 consecutive TV Times awards as the most popular personality before asking not to be considered again, was shy himself.

He says in the recording: "I don't have a specific talent. Radio and television is the medium for the introverted egomaniac. A lot of shy people are egotists, you know, and radio gives you an opportunity to talk to yourself endlessly and show off. You must be prepared to be yourself."

● *Wogan: In His Own Words is available now on BBC Sounds*

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‘Saving my life gave me the chance to become a mother’

BY **CHARLIE FENTON**

Aimee holds baby Jessica for first time

A MOTHER recovering from a double lung transplant is reunited with her premature baby in a heart-warming moment.

Aimee Morrison, 37, was undergoing treatment for pneumonia when she was told she was pregnant with her first child.

She gave birth to her daughter, Jessica, at just 24 weeks after entering labour prematurely. The baby weighed 1lb 8oz.

The mother, from Rotherham, South Yorks, then suffered a cardiac arrest days later.

Aimee was resuscitated, put on to advanced respiratory support and added to the lung transplant list at the Royal Papworth Hospital in Cambridge.

Her daughter had to be moved half a mile away to The Rosie Hospital because there is no maternity ward at the Royal Papworth.

Aimee, a former professional dancer, was then matched with a donor and had her life-saving double lung transplant.

Mum and baby together

Now, adorable video footage has captured the moment Aimee was finally able to hold Jessica, 29 days after she gave birth, following her recovery from surgery.

Aimee has since thanked the doctors and staff for giving her the chance to be a mum.

She said: “The nurses did my hair, helped me into a chair and I had my first cuddle with Jessica. It was incredibly emotional.

“What they have done for me and my family is nothing short of miraculous. They didn’t just save my life, they gave me the chance to become a mum. I’ve been given a second chance, and Jessica has been given her first. Even in the scariest moments, I always felt safe.

“When I couldn’t speak or move, the nurses still made me feel human – washing my hair, putting on moisturiser, talking to me, reassuring me.

“I wasn’t just a patient, I was a person, and those small acts of kindness meant everything.”

Critical care nurses arranged for Jessica to be brought to Aimee’s bedside in her incubator. Until then, Aimee had only seen photos of her daughter.

At the time she was still very poorly and had a tracheostomy fitted, meaning she couldn’t speak.

Amy said: “The moment we shared meant so much to me.”

Aimee had attended A&E after struggling to breathe. The mum said: “I never imagined it could be anything serious.” But to her shock, doctors diagnosed pneumonia.

Aimee added: “Everyone worked together to give me and my baby the best possible chance. I trusted them completely.”

Dr Jas Parmar, from Royal Papworth Hospital, said: “It’s heartwarming to see Aimee recovering so well and enjoying time with her daughter. This dual miracle is a testament to the expertise, teamwork and compassion of NHS staff.”

Aimee and Jessica with some of the hospital staff

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A dog for life? No, just the weekend, thanks

'After my wife and I cruelly changed our minds, Lola didn't speak to us for a week'

WE REGULARLY have 12 different dogs staying in our house. Not at the same time – that would be insane – but, every couple of weeks, we welcome one or two of our neighbours' pets into the family home; sometimes just for a few hours, other times for whole weekends or even longer.

Despite having no pets of our own, apart from a rather lacklustre goldfish, we have now become the de facto dog-sitters of our local neighbourhood. Next door lives Ringo, a delightful little Westie, who is just as comfortable in our house as in his own.

Over the road is Maggie, a skinny cockerpoo, and Vaughn, a handsome black labrador and retired guide dog.

A little way down our street are Poppy the border terrier, Ernie the King Charles spaniel, and Winston the golden retriever. Further afield there's a baby dachshund called Brigid, another border terrier called Twiglet, as well as Simba the retriever-poodle mix, Lulu the King Charles spaniel-poodle mix and my brother's dachshund-Jack Russell mix, Ziggy.

We also have friends in Wiltshire who leave their labrador and sausage dog – Beanie and Jackson – with us whenever they go on holiday.

But how did we end up caring for this menagerie of different breeds?

As toddlers, my two daughters used to pester me to buy them a puppy. We live in the suburbs of south-west London, surrounded by dog-owners constantly exercising their pets in the nearby parks, so it was hardly surprising my kids felt left out.

My wife and I felt guilty denying them a cuddly pet but we both struggled to balance work and domestic duties. Throwing a young dog into the mix would have added more stress to our lives. Besides, at the time, my daughters were far too young to take on the responsibility of exercising and clearing up after a fluffy friend.

As they got older, I thought the demand for a puppy might ease off somewhat. But pestering turned to pleading, and pleading turned to begging.

By the time my youngest daughter, Lola, had started at primary school, she was clamouring for a dog several times a day. Every time one of her friends' families welcomed a puppy into their home, that canine clamouring reached a crescendo.

We tried our best to appease her: doggy cuddly toys; dog figurines; dog-themed duvet covers and pyjamas; doggy wallpaper; doggy T-shirts and jumpers.

But it wasn't enough. Puppies occupied her thoughts and conversations. At one point she refused to watch a movie unless it featured dogs. My wife and I seriously worried we were denying our daughters the basic human right to care for a pet.

We very nearly relented. One weekend, when Lola was eight, we drove to a farm in the New Forest to meet a breeder selling a litter of the cutest Jack Russell and dachshund-cross pups.

Our hearts melted as Lola played with the tiny sausage dogs, their heads and paws far too big for their bodies while they lolloped, squealed and wagged their little tails in our laps. After half an hour, she had chosen the puppy who was to join our family.

Lola looked up at me and, with puppy-dog eyes herself, solemnly promised she would walk our newest family member every day, picking up poos whenever necessary.

My wife and I locked eyes across that farmhouse kitchen and realised our destiny was written.

We agreed with the breeder we would send a deposit as soon as we got back home. I had never seen Lola look happier. We even started discussing doggy names. During the drive back to London, after the puppy love had worn off somewhat, sadly the reality of the situation dawned on us.

My wife and I both had full-time jobs requiring long hours. I regularly travelled abroad for work. Our daughters relied on a part-time au pair for school pick-ups and drop-offs.

We were struggling to give our daughters enough of our time. How on Earth was a puppy going to fit into all this? Were we crazy?

After my wife and I cruelly but sensibly changed our minds, Lola didn't speak to us for a week… and I don't blame her. She was inconsolable. We felt terrible – our guilt compounded because both our families had owned dogs when we were kids – but we knew it was the right decision.

Then, one day after a neighbour brought her dog round to visit Lola, in an effort to cheer her up, I realised a compromise was possible. Why didn't we become dog-sitters instead of dog-owners?

IT WAS A revelation. From then on we let friends and neighbours know that chez Bliss was to be a canine sanctuary. At weekends and during school holidays, our house and back garden echoed to the pitter-patter of paws. We have since estimated that, over the last 14 years, we have

Dominic Bliss and his younger daughter Lola, main, with, from left, dogs Winston, Ringo, Poppy, Ernie, Brigid and Vaughn. Right, with daughters Lola and Daisy and their doggie charges, clockwise from left, Ringo, Poppy, Vaughn, Ernie, Brigid and Simba

Pictures: JONATHAN BUCKMASTER

Under duress from his young daughters to buy a family puppy, writer DOMINIC BLISS took the lead by becoming a serial borrower instead

looked after no less than 25 different dogs. The benefits of borrowing other people's dogs are numerous.

Just ask Rikke Rosenlund, founder of online agency Borrowmydoggy.com, which connects dog owners with trusted local people willing to look after dogs for free.

Having launched 12 years ago, she now has over a million registered dog owners across the UK and Ireland.

Rather like a human dating website, users write profiles in the hope of matching a dog to a borrower. There's a membership fee – currently £49 a year for dog owners and £13 for borrowers – which covers liability insurance for both parties, as well as a helpline and emergency vet cover.

Rikke, whose company headquarters are in west London, points out the numerous benefits of borrowing a dog, including extra exercise, improved mental wellbeing, the love of a furry friend and the chance to meet other dog owners while out walking.

It's also an excellent way for people to try out dog ownership before making a full commitment.

Rikke very much practises what she preaches, opting to borrow a dog instead of owning one herself. Her current charge is a brown labrador called Aston that she cares for once a week.

"The thing I never expected to come out of this was the sense of community," she says.

"You get to know people on your own street so much better, and everyone helps each other out, whether it's giving some happy dog time, or taking care of dogs."

She says many of her members become close friends through their shared time with pets.

The Dogs Trust is a UK charity that campaigns for the wellbeing of dogs. It supports the idea of people borrowing dogs, but with some sensible caveats.

"Alternative care arrangements can be valuable for some dogs, particularly those who find it difficult spending periods of time on their own," says Dom Burke, behaviour policy officer at the trust. "It provides them with additional companionship and interaction."

But he highlights the responsibilities involved.

"Every dog is an individual, with their own needs, routines, preferences and dislikes. All dogs need consistent, knowledgeable care, something that casual arrangements can't always guarantee.

"We're concerned that well-intentioned but inexperienced borrowers could inadvertently put the dog, or others, at risk.

"If the dog is injured or becomes unwell, or causes harm, who ensures they receive prompt veterinary treatment? And who is liable for the costs?"

HE STRESSES the need to check whether the dog's insurance is valid when under someone else's care, and whether the borrower is insured. "Clear agreements, a full understanding of the dog's individual needs, and a focus on the dog's welfare must always come first," he adds.

Back at the Bliss family residence, aside from a few accidents on the living-room carpet, we have fortunately never had any major problems with our canine guests.

My daughters are now 19 and 18 years old. I had hoped by now their desire for a puppy might have waned somewhat.

No such luck. Despite the 12 pooches we regularly have to stay, there isn't much let-up in the demands that we buy a puppy of our own.

For years, my wife and I have stood firm. Now our daughters are both adults, however, with no sign of leaving home any time soon, for how much longer can we hold out?

'You get to know people on your own street so much better. Everyone helps each other out'

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What's your tipple?

by **Matt Nixson**

Tax hikes leave drinkers with a sour aftertaste

THE SIX wines below represent some of New Zealand's best and brightest, but today's column is about something less palatable – tax hikes about to pummel the drinks industry. Wine and spirit prices will rise again when the latest alcohol duty increase, announced at the autumn Budget, comes into effect on Monday – which means it's worth stocking up on your favourites this weekend. Larger retailers like supermarkets may choose to swallow some of the costs but it's harder for indies.

The 3.66% increase means duty on a bottle of wine of 14.5% abv, has gone up by £1.10 since August 2023. And with spirits, nearly two-thirds of the price of an average bottle of gin at 37.5% abv is tax, while duty alone in the same two-and-a-half-year period has risen by £1.38. Since the introduction of the UK's new taxation system, the levy on beer and spirits has risen by more than 18%. For higher-strength wines, the increase has been even greater – more than 49% on a 14.5% abv wine.

The Wine and Spirit Trade Association argues the Chancellor's decision to keep piling on taxes only perpetuates the economy's "doom loop" – leading to higher prices for consumers and falling sales, which drains Treasury funds while fuelling inflation.

Miles Beale, chief executive of the Wine and Spirit Trade Association, says: "Despite the OBR at last acknowledging that higher prices lead to a decline in receipts, the government fails to recognise that its own policy is benefiting no one. For the nation's wine and spirit sector the complexities of price changes, especially for wine, which is now taxed by strength, mean more red-tape headaches ahead."

The WSTA is calling for ministers to recognise the pressure on consumers, retailers and hospitality and offer relief. And I join them wholeheartedly.

KIWI CRACKERS TO LIGHTEN LEVY

1 Esk Valley Pinot Gris 2024 (from £14.50, 13.5%)
Full-bodied, dryish and positively bursting with flavours of peach, pear and apricot, with notes of citrus, honey and just a hint of spice. Long, refreshing finish. Available from Amps Wine Merchant and Cambridge Wine Merchants.

2 Laithwaites Limited Release Hawke's Bay Merlot Cabernet 2025 (£12.99, 13%)
This full-bodied and smooth-finishing merlot-heavy blend – filled with cherry, plum liquorice and chocolate notes – is currently reduced from £19.99 so snap it up while you can. A genuine red wine revolution. Available from Laithwaites.

3 Leftfield Albarino 2023 (£13.50, 12.5%)
This stunning aromatic white is fresh, fruity and vibrant with plenty of melon, peach and zesty citrus on the palate and the nose. Delivers a crisp, clean finish with plenty of acidity. Available from Tesco.

4 Dry Lake Cricket Club Sauvignon Blanc 2024 (£16.99, 12%)
The pale straw colour of this fabulously moreish sauvignon blanc understates the juicy flavours of tropical fruit and citrus that lie within. Prepare to be hit for six by this dry, medium-bodied beauty. Available from Laithwaites.

5 Mission Estate Gimblett Gravels Reserve Hawke's Bay Syrah 2023 (£14.95, 13%)
Another really top-notch red wine to stock up on. Dry and full-bodied with a slightly acidic finish, enjoy tons of black fruit flavours with notes of pepper, vanilla and oak. Delicious. Available from The Wine Society.

6 Jackson Estate Stich Sauvignon Blanc (from £11, 13%)
This bone-dry white with a crisp, acidic finish is filled with aromas of citrus, peach and honey with notes of tropical fruits majoring on melon. Medium-bodied and moreish. Available from Waitrose, Majestic and Ocado.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Share your own drink-related tips with matt.nixson@reachplc.com

Sleigh up! Yorkshireman's cool Olympics run

Iceman Axel, left, will pilot bobsled against world's best

BY **DOUG SHIELDS**

THE Trinidad and Tobago bobsleigh team is on its way to the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy, captained by a ginger-haired Yorkshireman.

Axel Brown, 33, set off yesterday for the games which start in Milano Cortina on Friday.

He set up the republic's bobsled federation in 2021 after competing for Britain. Axel's mum Carolyn was born in the Caribbean to white parents, gifting him dual nationality.

Now he's set to pilot the four-man bobsleigh at speeds of up to 100mph against giants of the sport, including Germany and the US.

Axel, who was born and raised in Harrogate, said: "The big guns have got sled technology we don't even know exists. We can only ever play catch-up. We would be happy with 27th place out of 28. We're on Operation Don't Come Last, let's see if we can beat somebody else."

He manages the team, dividing his time between the Caribbean, UK and winter resorts. His five-strong squad also qualified for the two-man event.

Referring to the 1993 film which told the story of the Jamaican bobsled team making it to the 1988 Winter Olympics, Axel said: "I probably hear about Cool Runnings on a daily basis.

"That movie is everyone's cultural reference for our sport. It's the only reason anyone cares."

Couple died days apart on Asia holiday

BY **SOPHIE ROBINSON**

A BRITISH pensioner drank himself to death just days after he witnessed his wife drown in a Maldives scuba diving accident.

Retired miner Malcolm Richmond, 71, passed away in hospital on Christmas Eve. He had been found "heavily intoxicated" at an airport as he waited for a flight home.

Days earlier he had been diving with wife, Elaine, 70, when she was pulled out to sea by strong currents, a double inquest heard.

The couple were regular visitors to the South Asian country and were staying at the luxury Ellaidhoo Maldives resort.

Inquests into the deaths of the couple, from Chesterfield, Derbys, were opened yesterday.

Assistant coroner Matthew Kewley said the pair were reportedly "experienced divers".

He added: "On December 19, they had carried out a dive when the sea conditions deteriorated, which unfortunately led to Mrs Richmond being pulled away in a strong current.

"Her husband immediately raised the alarm and sought assistance and a search was commenced, but sadly the body of Mrs Richmond was then recovered from the water."

The cause of death for currency handler Mrs Richmond was given as drowning and asphyxiation.

Opening the hearing into her husband's death, Mr Kewley said: "On December 24, hospital staff in the Maldives called the Maldives police department to say a British national had passed away.

"It is understood that Mr Richmond had been admitted to hospital on December 21 after his health deteriorated whilst he was at the airport waiting to leave the Maldives.

"It was reported that he was heavily intoxicated at the airport."

His cause of death was given as acute alcohol intoxication, multi-organ dysfunction and cardiac arrest.

Both deaths were reported to the coroner on January 6, after their bodies were repatriated to the UK.

Mr Kewley said a full inquest would take place at a later date after further inquiries had been made with authorities in the Maldives.

Elaine and Malcolm died on dive holiday

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30-SECOND CHALLENGE

JUST follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row. Set your own 30-second challenge. For the very young or arithmetically rusty, you have 30 seconds for the BEGINNER task.

For a greater challenge, try BEGINNER and INTERMEDIATE in 30 seconds. True mental gymnasts should try INTERMEDIATE and ADVANCED in 30 seconds together.

Today's answers can be found on page 43

										YOUR ANSWERS
Beginner	65	÷5	+43	5/8 OF THIS	-19	x3	+28	÷4	+7	
Intermediate	254	-186	3/4 OF THIS	+194	60% OF THIS	-84	x4	+64	÷4	
Advanced	8	x17	+256	5/14 OF THIS	-83	÷3	+285	9/16 OF THIS	-146	

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30
EUROMILLIONS
14 18 31 35 46 7 11
THUNDERBALL
24 29 36 38 39 13

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29
SET FOR LIFE 13 24 31 33 36 3

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28
LOTTERY 33 45 50 52 58 59 15
THUNDERBALL 3 6 14 22 24 4

THE HEALTH LOTTERY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30
16 25 29 37 42 22

THURSDAY, JANUARY 29
8 9 17 22 30 40

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PHONE POLL RESULTS

We asked in our poll on Thursday:

Are former Tories being 'drama queens' by joining Reform?

YES: 43%

NO: 57%

DO YOU HAVE A STORY OR A PHOTO?

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or email:
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If you have a photo:
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Fill in all the squares so that each row, each column, and each 3x3 square contain all the digits from 1 to 9

	3	5				7		1
				3	7		4	
1		7	5				8	3
	9			1		4	5	
7			4	6				9
	1	4		8	9		3	
8	5				3			4
		1	6	4				
	4					2	7	8

This is the Quick Sudoku for the solver in a hurry.
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(Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge)
For extra clues call:
09013 225 602
(Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge)

MORE PUZZLES – PAGE 42

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

9	3	2	5	8	4	6	7	1
4	1	5	9	6	7	2	3	8
7	8	6	1	3	2	5	4	9
5	6	8	7	2	9	3	1	4
2	9	3	4	1	6	7	8	5
1	4	7	3	5	8	9	6	2
6	2	1	8	9	3	4	5	7
8	7	9	6	4	5	1	2	3
3	5	4	2	7	1	8	9	6

Austin powers epic journey

BY **ISOBEL WILLIAMS**

A FARMER showed his love of the land by driving from Land's End to John O'Groats and back in a 101-year-old car.

Ralph Messenger covered 2,500 miles in his vintage 1924 Austin 12, which has a top speed of 40mph.

Along the way he raised £7,000 for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

The idea came after his cousin Richard Messenger, a dad of four from Cumbria, was diagnosed with the cruel disease two years ago. Ralph, 49, from Dorchester, said: "I am not really a marathon runner or organiser of coffee mornings, so I tried to think of something that I am interested in to raise money."

The car broke down three times during the eight-day trip but fellow Austin owners rallied around to fix it. Ralph also said: "I did venture on to the motorway once and then regretted it hugely."

From top, Ralph at home, in the Scottish Highlands and near John O'Groats

The Saturday briefing

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER by **CAROLINE FORD**

Pictures: GETTY

NAILED IT: Multi-instrumentalist Dolly Parton and, below, iconic left-hander John McEnroe

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Is there anything you're yearning to know? Send your questions, on any subject, to the contacts given below, and we will do our best to answer them...

Q Many years ago I saw Dolly Parton perform live. It was a magical night and she played so many instruments but I can't remember all of them. Can you tell me what she plays?

Raymond Jennings, Derby

A The Queen of Country – Dolly Parton grew up surrounded by the rich musical traditions of gospel, bluegrass, country and folk.

Her family of 14 often played homemade instruments, such as spoons, washboard and washtub bass – a string instrument made from a bucket and a broom handle.

The singer-songwriter, who celebrated her 80th birthday this month, spent her childhood playing these musical utensils and singing in church – and by the age of six, had written her first song.

She also played the snare drum in her high school marching band and got her first real guitar at the age of eight, from her Uncle Bill.

During her concerts, Dolly typically plays 7-8 instruments, including guitar, fiddle, five-string banjo, piano, dulcimer (an Appalachian string instrument) and autoharp (a zither-like instrument) but is known to play up to 20, including the recorder, saxophone and harmonica.

She says she plays "some of everything" but is only proficient enough "to make a show".

One unique "instrument" credited to Dolly is her long acrylic nails. When writing the iconic "9 to 5", on the set of the film by the same name, Dolly tapped her nails together to mimic a typewriter sound, which was included in the final recording of the song. Her nails even earned their own credit – "nails by Dolly".

Q My sister recently told me that the word sinister comes from being left-handed. As a left-handed person, I'm keen to know if this is true and why?

Mavis Sutton, Luton, Beds

A Sinister has an etymology that might seem biased against left-handed people, as the word – which evolved to mean ominous or threatening – comes from the Latin word of the same spelling that means "on the left side".

Roman soldiers carried their shields in their left hand and spear or sword in their right, as they believed the left was weaker. The negative association may also stem from cultural practices, such as the left hand being used for hygiene purposes, leading to it being considered "unclean".

About 85-90 per cent of the population is right-handed, so using your left hand in earlier times singled a person out and caused suspicion.

In the Middle Ages, left-handed people were associated with the devil and often accused of witchcraft or demonic possession. Throwing spilled salt over the left shoulder arose from the belief that evil spirits lurked on that side and the salt was used to blind "them".

Left-handedness has also been seen in positive ways. The ancient Celts saw the left side as sacred and a source of life. The Native American Zuni people view being left-handed as a sign of good luck and in Tibetan tantric Buddhism, the left hand represents wisdom.

Some of the most famous people in history were left handed, such as Winston Churchill, Leonardo Da Vinci, Mozart and Marie Curie. King Charles, Paul McCartney, Bill Gates, John McEnroe, Martina Navratilova, Mark Zuckerberg and Barack Obama are all left-handed.

In the past, left-handed children were physically forced to write with their right hand. David Bowie was left-handed but taught himself to play guitar with his right hand, due to the scarcity of left-handed guitars in post-war Britain.

Although seen as a human trait, some animals favour their left limb such as kangaroos and parrots.

Q Why are those who hold a PhD and those with an MD both entitled to be called doctor?

Philip Jones, Newport, Gwent

A People with a PhD – Doctor of Philosophy – have a longer claim to the title "doctor" than those awarded a MD – Doctor of Medicine but both are Doctoral degrees. The word doctor comes from the Latin docere – meaning "to teach" – and the title was first used for scholars and theologians granted a license to teach after attaining the highest college or university degree in any subject.

There were Doctors of the Church and Doctors of Law long before the term came to be applied to medics – with the first Doctoral degree believed to have been awarded in Paris in 1150.

Medical practitioners were originally called physicians and surgeons and the use of "doctor" became more common in the early 18th century, as medical schools began to award the MD degree.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR INTRIGUING QUESTIONS ON ANY SUBJECT:

- **By email:** put "questions" in the subject line and send to caroline.ford@reachplc.com
- **By post:** to Any Questions, Daily Express, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AP
- **Unfortunately we cannot reply individually, but we will feature the best questions on this page.**

forgotten verse

Celia Cooper, from Dudley, would like to read again a poem that describes the flowers of the snowdrop as resembling "little ladies" – but she can't remember who it is written by. British writer Laurence Alma-Tadema wrote the poem about how snowdrops emerge from the dark of winter to bring hope, as early messengers of spring.

SNOWDROPS

Laurence Alma-Tadema
(1865-1940)

"Little ladies, white
and green,
With your spears
about you,
Will you tell us where
you've been
Since we lived
without you?

You are sweet, and
fresh, and clean,
With your
pearly faces;
In the dark earth
where you've been
There are
wondrous places:

Yet you come
again, serene,
When the leaves
are hidden;
Bringing joy from
where you've been
You return unbidden–

Little ladies, white
and green,
Are you glad to
cheer us?
Hunger not for
where you've been,
Stay till Spring
be near us!"

If you can't remember the words to a favourite verse or song from yesteryear, send us a snippet and we'll do our best to find all the wonderful words.

BEACHCOMBER 109 YEARS OLD AND STILL RESOLVING DISPUTES...

RELATIONS between long-term allies have been through a difficult period recently. At one stage, doubts were even voiced about whether one of our oldest international friends could be trusted.

My comments refer to the dispute I have had recently with the Beachcomber Towers polar bear, with whom I previously enjoyed a mutually respectful relationship.

I had shared his views on many matters, from the irrelevance of golf to the delight of breakfast kippers but the other day he was looking dejected. What's up?" I asked him.

"Oh," he sighed. "The price of fish; global temperatures: inflation The usual stuff." I sensed he was holding something back. "I was wondering whether Greenland had affected your mood," I said. "What do you know about that?" he snapped back at me.

"Who told you?" he said. "Told me what, exactly?" I asked, but he just shook his head defiantly.

"So it's true," I said.

"I suspected as much when our phone bill listed calls you had made to the White House." "Just chatting with the President," he said.

"Then you must know that he wants to conquer Greenland," I said. "I believe that you have relatives there?"

"There are about 2,500 polar bears in West Greenland and nobody knows how many in the east," he said. "The polar bears need the US to protect them from Russia and China." "Hunting or killing polar bears has been illegal in Russia since 1956," I told him, "except in self-defence, and even then they need permission from Moscow to shoot them." He looked shocked, so I added to the effect by mentioning that Tripadvisor mentions only one Chinese restaurant in Greenland, so I doubted that China would be interested either. Then I asked him: "Has President Trump asked you to represent Greenland on his Board of Peace?" "Board of Peace?" he queried. "Surely you've got that wrong. Isn't it Bored With Peace? Isn't that why he wants to invade Greenland, Canada, Panama and Venezuela and why he invited Putin and Belarus onto his Bored Board?"

"I'm afraid not," I replied. "And even worse, he thinks playing golf is a good way to spend an afternoon." "What?" bellowed the bear. "That's ridiculous. Please cancel my request for one billion dollars to cover the membership fee to the Bored Board."

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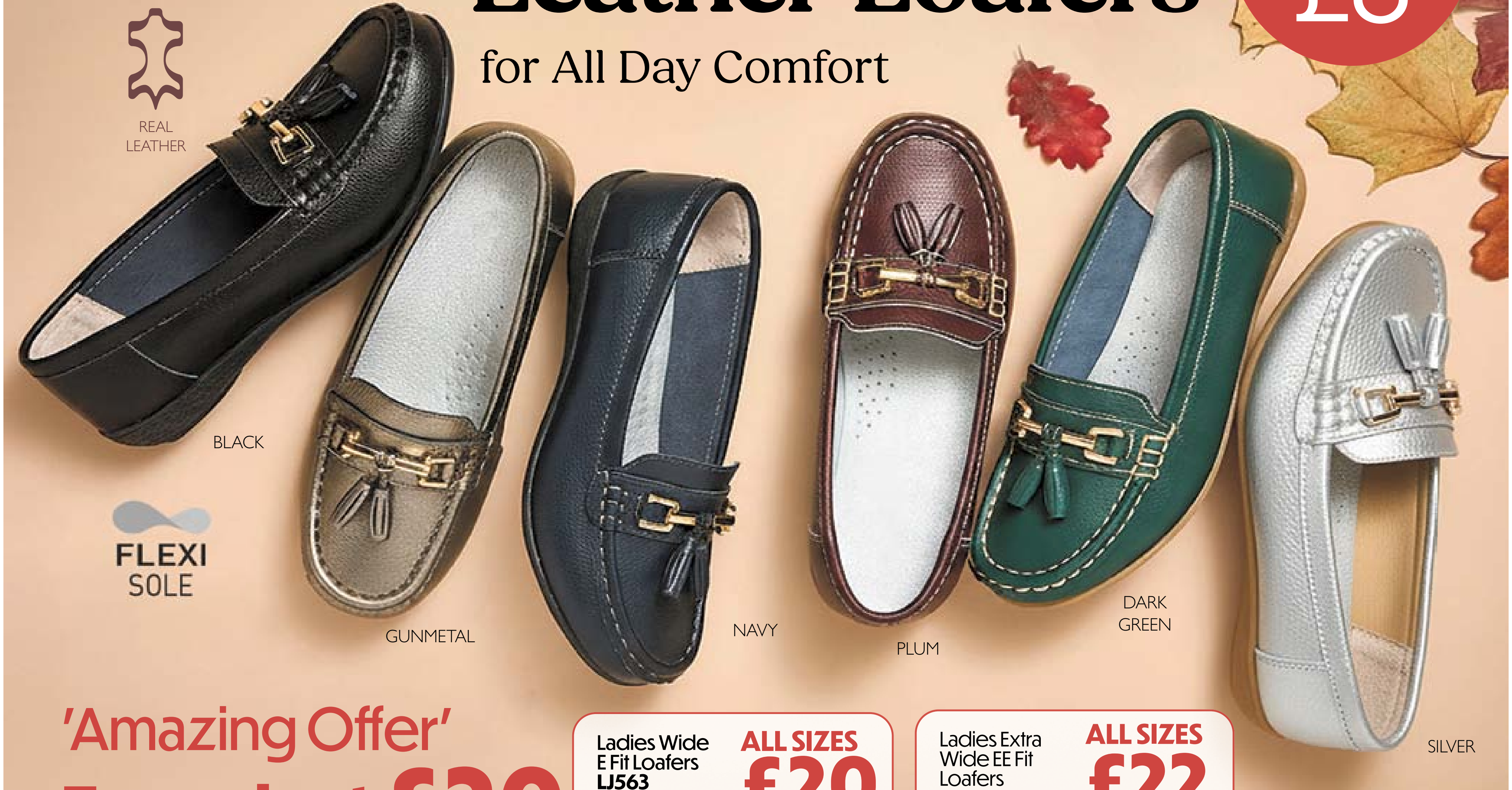

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Cool drum heartbeat of Jamaica

Sly Dunbar

Musician/producer

BORN MAY 10, 1952 – DIED JANUARY 26, 2026, AGED 73

SLY DUNBAR played with all the greats from Bob Marley and Bob Dylan to The Rolling Stones, Herbie Hancock, Joe Cocker and Ian Dury to name but a few. He was best known as one half of the prolific Jamaican rhythm section and reggae production duo Sly And Robbie.

During a stellar music career, he was a 13-time Grammy nominee and received two Grammy awards: the 1985 award for Best Reggae Recording for the Black Uhuru album Anthem, for which Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare were producers, and one for the 1999 Best Reggae Album for the Sly And Robbie album entitled Friends.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica, the revered drummer started out playing on tin cans after watching Lloyd Knibbs And The Skatalites on TV.

"I saw Knibbs playing and I thought, 'I want to be a drummer' because he's the hardest worker in the band," he later said.

At 15, Dunbar began playing in a band called the Yardbrooms and his first appearance on a recording was on the Dave And Ansell Collins album Double Barrel. Dunbar met bassist Robbie Shakespeare in his teens and formed the rhythm section of the Revolutionaries, who became regular session musicians at the famed Channel One recording studio.

They spent the 1970s working with major reggae acts such as Gregory Isaacs, Dennis Brown and Barrington Levy.

The duo survived on bread and water during that period to save up enough money to start their own production company, Taxi Records, in 1980.

The outfit nurtured a brand new generation of Jamaican artists such as Shaggy, Shabba Ranks and Skip Marley.

Around the same time, they provided the beats on the Grace Jones' hit album from 1981, Nightclubbing, which opened the doors for them to work with singers including Madonna and Sinead O'Connor. Later they developed a new take on dancehall with the duo Chaka Demus & Pliers, scoring hits with songs such as Tease Me and Murder She Wrote in the early 1990s.

Sly Dunbar and partner Robbie Shakespeare played on 200,000-plus recordings

Shakespeare (who died in 2021) estimated that he and Dunbar had taken part in more than 200,000 recordings, either their own or as backing musicians or producers. Dunbar was awarded the Order of Distinction by the Jamaican government in 2015.

He died at home in bed. An exact cause of death was not given, though he had reportedly been ill for some time.

He is survived by wife Thelma and daughter Natasha.

Norman Gifford

Cricketer

BORN MARCH 30, 1940 – DIED JANUARY 19, 2026, AGED 85

THE legendary former Worcestershire spinner and captain Norman Gifford MBE played in 15 Test matches for England.

The slow, left-armer spent 22 years with Worcestershire from 1960 to 1982, taking 1,615 first-class wickets and winning the County Championship in 1964 and 1965 and again, as captain, 10 years later.

He went on to play for and captain Warwickshire, playing well into his 40s.

Since 2016, in recognition of his contribution to both Worcestershire and Warwickshire, the Norman Gifford Trophy is awarded to the winner of the T20 Blast matches between the two teams.

After retirement, Gifford went into coaching and died following a long illness.

BBC's respected 'voice of India'

Mark Tully

Journalist

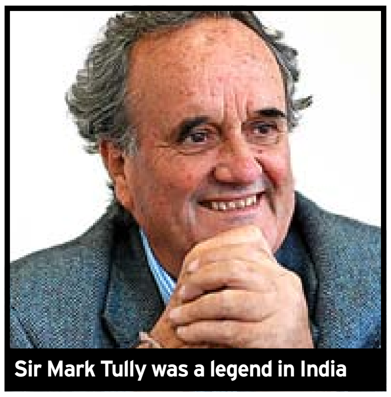
BORN OCTOBER 24, 1935 – DIED JANUARY 25, 2026, AGED 90

SIR Mark Tully's name was synonymous with India. The journalist was the bureau chief of the BBC in New Delhi for more than 20 years, from 1972 to 1993.

In 2017 he made a documentary for the BBC World Service to coincide with the 70th anniversary of partition and as he toured locations across the subcontinent, it was clear that his standing as the BBC's "voice of India" still endured two decades on from his resignation. His "beat" during those years also took in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

William Mark Tully was born in India and so his reporting often captured the sense of belonging he felt for the subcontinent.

Born in what is now Kolkata to an accountant father William, who worked for the British Raj, and his wife Patience, he was sent to England for his education: Twyford School in Winchester and then Marlborough College.


Sir Mark Tully was a legend in India

He went on to study theology at Cambridge University with a view to joining the priesthood, but later admitted he struggled with the discipline and "rather liked beer".

Instead he returned to India to take up an administrative job with the BBC in 1965 before becoming a talks writer with its Eastern Service in 1969. Three years later he took on the role that made him famous.

In 1992, when covering the demolition of the Babri Masjid by Hindu activists, some of the perpetrators confronted him, chanting "death to Mark Tully", reflecting their dislike of the BBC.

Tully was locked in a room until a Hindu priest helped him escape.

He resigned from the BBC two years later after an argument with John Birt, the then director general, about how the corporation was being run.

Knighted in 2002, he was also awarded two of India's highest honours – the Padma Shri and the Padma Bhushan, both in recognition of distinguished service.

In 1960, he married Margaret Butler, with whom he had two daughters, Sarah and Emma, and two sons, Sam and Patrick.

He lived with her on his visits to London, while sharing his Delhi home with girlfriend Gillian Wright. He is survived by both women, his four children and 10 grandchildren.

Peter Grosvenor

Journalist

BORN MAY 4, 1933 – DIED JANUARY 10, 2026, AGED 92

PETER Grosvenor was the esteemed literary editor of the Daily Express during Fleet Street's finest years. He held the role from 1962 to 1996 and was a popular figure at the paper, alongside his Labrador Blackie, who would accompany him to the office.

Originally from Bath, Grosvenor studied philosophy, politics and economics at Oxford, before making his way in journalism, at first on the now defunct News Chronicle. He was their "man on the run", sent to a town in Britain with a prize for the reader who spotted him first.

Next stop was the Daily Express books page where he was soon promoted to literary editor. He worked under the uncompromising proprietor Lord Beaverbrook, who was keen to encourage intellectual readers to the paper.

Renowned Peter Grosvenor

Peter would get phone calls from Beaverbrook who would say: "The Express has more A1 readers than any other newspaper. It's an important job you do, Mr Grosvenor."

Grosvenor serialised many books such as The Eagle Has Landed by Jack Higgins and Flashman by George MacDonald Fraser.

He once conducted an interview with the world-renowned primatologist and conservationist Jane Goodall while sitting beside a sandpit watching their respective children playing. "They are really just like chimps, you know," she told him.

Grosvenor penned his own books too, including co-writing Ian Woosnam's Golf Masterpieces: Classic Tales From The Clubhouse.

He married Rita Becker who worked on the Daily Mirror in 1962. They had three children but later divorced. He died in the Royal London Hospital having previously suffered a stroke and leaves three sons, Simon, Paul and Matthew and seven grandchildren.

Written by KAREN ROCKETT

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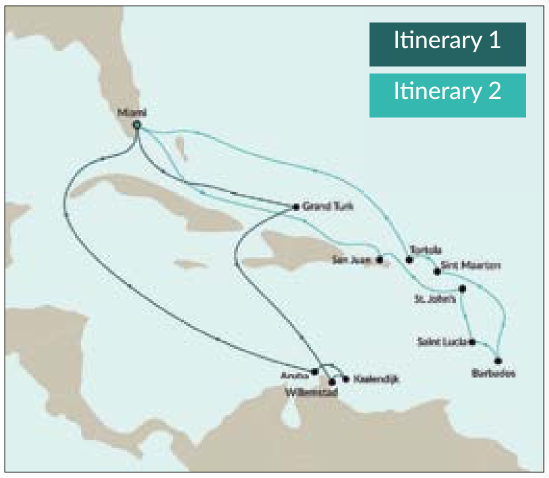

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^Prices shown based on 26 October 2026 departure.

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All Flights & Transfers
London departure – regional flights available

Overnight flight

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+Prices shown based on 4 November 2026 departure.

HOLIDAY CODE: AME8283

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Puzzled?

PROBLEMS TO TEST YOUR BRAIN POWER

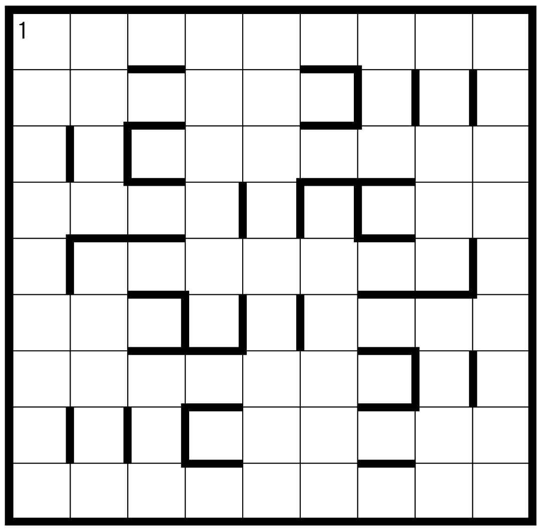
MAKE YOU VERY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Dedicated (9)
Cutting tool (3)
Landscape (7)
French confection (6)
Cog (4)
Lungs, for example (6)
Relying on (9)
Stomachs (7)
Minor acting role (3,4)
Ginger _, soft drink (3)
Spoke (4)

DOWN

1 Sent disco (anag.) (9)
Something that discourages (9)
Premature (5)
Condiment (5)
Purpose or goal (9)
Young woman (6)
Soon (4)
Brewed beverage (3)
Killer whale (4)
Chart (3)
Myth (6)



For today's solution call:
0907 181 2581

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION
ACROSS Imprecise, Moment, Machete, Reps, Per, Spouses, May, Hear, Plastic, Berate, Uncertain.
DOWN Impromptu, Mope, Reason, Encounter, Ike, Sites, Evergreen, T-shirt, Salon, Anti, Arc.

**SP: Spoke - Helpline 0333 202 3390*

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Reader Offer in partnership with Yimbly.com

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ALPHAPUZZLE™

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R ~~S~~ T U V W X ~~Y~~ Z

■	2	■	8	■	2	■	20	■	12	■	24	■
2	4	20	13	19	22	■	1	2	10	24	7	18
■	18	■	13	■	7	22	13	■	2	■	23	■
4	1	25	12	■	10	■	13	■	9	2	19	3
■	21	■	■	26	13	2	10	22	■	■	11	■
26	2	11	13	24	■	24	■	10	13	26	13	24
23	■	■	■	2	24	25	26	25	■	■	■	2
4	15	23	2	22	■	3	■	17	25	5	5	9
■	23	■	■	13	16	13	20	18	■	■	13	■
20	7	4	1	■	23	■	7	■	6	25	19	13
■	10	■	7	■	19	7	8	■	7	■	25	■
21	23	18	2	19	18	■	13	4	18	2	18	13
■	21	■	14	■	2	■	10	■	13	■	1	■

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
			S					Y				
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Alphapuzzle® tests logic and word power. Each grid number represents a letter. Every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter or letters – below the main grid – to start. **Solution next Saturday.**
Difficulty: 8/10 **Target:** 25 mins
Clue: Poem is due on the radio.

THINKING SPACE

For up to six Extra Letter clues:
0907 181 2567*
(deduct two minutes for each clue letter heard)
Today's full solution: **0907 181 2566***
*Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.

Alternatively, for six extra letter clues direct to your mobile, text **DSXALPHA** to **64343.** Texts cost £1 plus your standard network rate.

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS Smudge, Remark, Roe, Once, Dune, Adapted, Amid, Yawn, Azure, View, Join, Obese, Lose, Stay, Banquet, Hero, Rota (clue), Oar, Canyon, Expire.
DOWN Anvil, Minim, Opera, Ideas, Dread, Ebony, Ersatz, Bunion, Use, Rector, Square, Muddy, Strap, About, Renew, After, Nanny.

Alphapuzzle® ©2025 Acorn Editorial Ltd. All words appear in Chambers Dictionary.

CAN YOU TACKLE THE EXTRA TOUGH ULTRA ALPHAPUZZLE® IN THE SUNDAY EXPRESS EVERY WEEK?

PENTALETTA

L		E
	B	
A		R

Can you find 21 or more words containing only the five letters shown on the left? Each word must include the letter in the centre, in this case B, and must contain at least four letters, but there is no limit on the number of times you can use a letter in any word. Your list should include an eight-letter word that's satisfactory.

Average mark: 20 words • **Good:** 26 words
Excellent: 31 words • **Incredible:** 34 words

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION: entente, epee, inept, intent, neep, nett, nine, ninepin, nineteen, peen, peep, penne, penni, pent, petit, petite, pine, pinene, pipe, pipette, teen, teepee, tenet, tenpin, tent, tepee, tiepin, tine, tippet.
The clued word was: PENITENT

SUDOKU

		8	5		4		3	
	5				9	8		
7		6				1		5
			9	5				3
	2				7		6	
9				8				
1		2				5		6
	4	9	7				2	
	6		8		1	4	9	

Fill the grid so that every column, row, and 3x3 square includes all the digits from 1 to 9.
Level: Moderate
Target: 24 mins

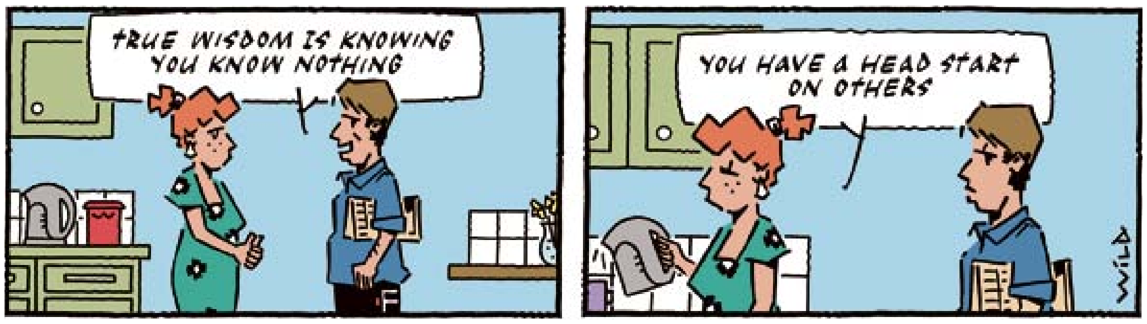
LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

1	9	4	7	5	8	6	2	3
5	6	8	1	3	2	7	4	9
7	3	2	6	4	9	1	8	5
9	1	6	4	8	5	2	3	7
2	8	5	3	1	7	4	9	6
3	4	7	9	2	6	5	1	8
8	7	1	2	6	3	9	5	4
6	2	3	5	9	4	8	7	1
4	5	9	8	7	1	3	6	2

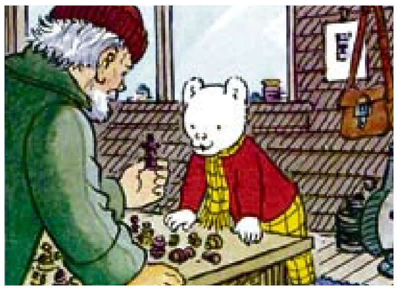
For extra clues call:
0901 322 5603
**Calls cost 75p plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

For today's full solution
call: 0907 181 2575
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

FAITH, HOPE AND SUE Lisa Wild

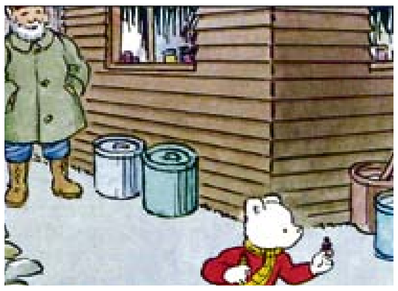

TRUE WISDOM IS KNOWING YOU KNOW NOTHING
YOU HAVE A HEAD START ON OTHERS
WILD

RUPERT AND THE PENGUINS No 28



"It's not complete, but we're all right! Here's the Black King!" "And the White!"

The explorer holds up a box of chessmen. "Here we are! The very thing!" he exclaims and starts to spread them out on the table. "It isn't a complete set, I'm afraid," he says. "But here's the Black King." "Yes, and here is the White King," chimes in Rupert, holding up another piece. "That makes five royal names, not just four. Won't King Penguin be surprised," he adds, and clutching the kings, runs outside.

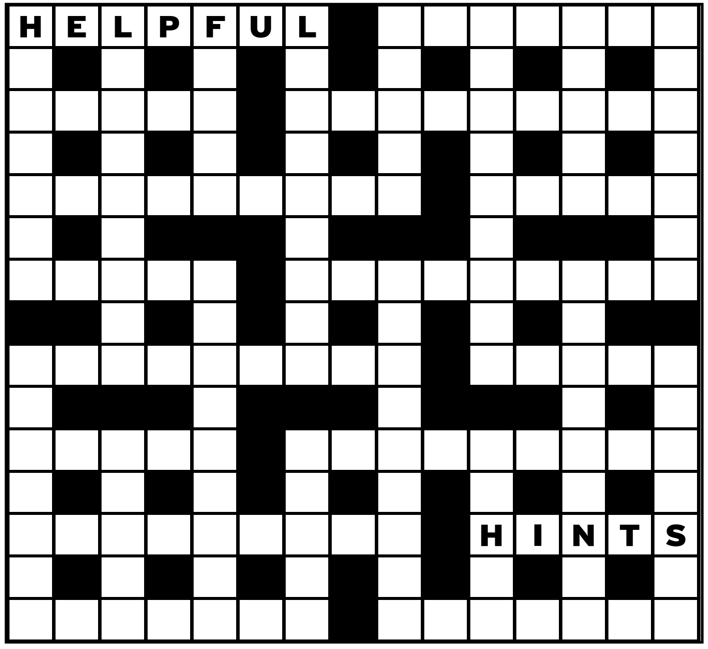


The precious chessmen Rupert clasps. "Five royal names!" he gasps.

THE SUNSHINE PUZZLE

The Sunshine Puzzle has been a firm favourite with readers of the Express for many years. All you need to do is find the correct home for the listed words. We have helped you by placing two. Here are the words that go into the grid:

CHORD
CRUST
FLEET
GEESE
HINTS
OTHER
PASTE
PRIDE
SCRAP
STARS
STOOD
TENSE
DEPOSIT
DESSERT
DRESSES
HELPFUL
HUTCHES
MARBLES
OPPOSED
STEPPED
CROCODILE
EMOTIONAL
ENERGETIC
GROCERIES
HESITATED
IMPATIENT
LANDSCAPE
LIGHTNING
OVERNIGHT
PETROLEUM
SENTENCES
STRUCTURE



For today's solution call: **0907 181 2584**

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

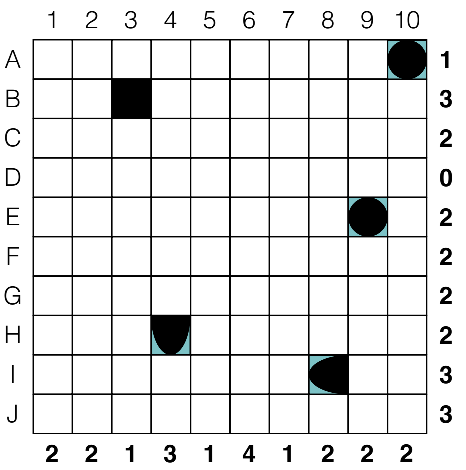
LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

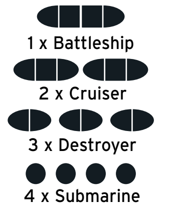
ACROSS Perhaps, Burgess, Pizza, Reservoir, Rust, Jaded, Bone, Smash, Mortician, Surprises, Ensue, Boar, Batch, Star, Imitative, Dough, Extreme, Satisfy. **DOWN** Papyrus, Razes, Ajar, Sarcasm, Besmear, Rare, Economics, Surgeon, Shire, Video, Aerialist, One, Subside, Seaside, Success, Earthly, Truss, Sage, Edit.

THE DAILY EXPRESS 30-SECOND CHALLENGE

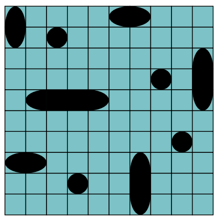
TODAY'S ANSWERS: BEGINNER = 26; INTERMEDIATE = 79; ADVANCED = 25.

BATTLESHIPS



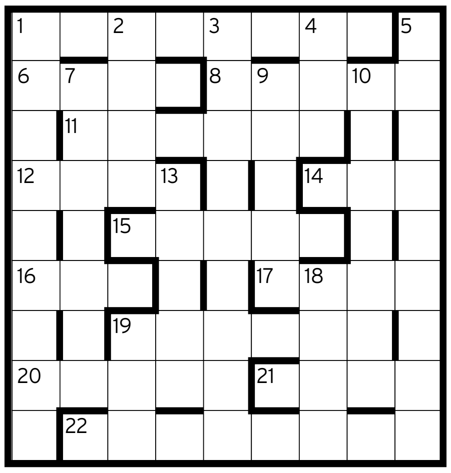


LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION



FIND where the fleet of ships shown is hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some squares have been filled in to start you off.

SMALL CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Writing pad (8)
6 Candid (4)
8 Customary (5)
11 Simpler (6)
12 Fruit pie (4)
14 Vase for storing ashes (3)
15 Sorrowfully (5)
16 Consume food (3)
17 Blackthorn fruit (4)
19 Gentle and affectionate (6)
20 Sharp pain (5)
21 Destiny (4)
22 Remade us (anag.) (8)

DOWN
1 Compass direction (9)
2 Rip (4)
3 Structures (9)
4 Belonging to us (3)
5 Made a mistake (9)
7 Serf (7)
9 Aquatic mammals (5)
10 Transport hub (7)
13 Snatched (5)
18 Shakespearean king (4)
19 Fasten or bind (3)

For today's solution call: **0907 181 2583**

**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge.*

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Swallows, 6 Paws, 8 Arise, 11 Magnet, 12 Rays, 14 Art, 15 Stuck, 16 Tip, 17 Tsar, 19 Organs, 20 Agree, 21 Vase, 22 Messages.
DOWN 1 Spiritual, 2 Away, 3 Languages, 4 Wit, 5 Centuries, 7 Amazing, 9 React, 10 Surpass, 13 Store, 18 Snag, 19 Ore.

TARGET

L	E	I
O	Y	U
R	T	N

HOW many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters shown here? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each must contain the centre letter and there must be at least one nine-letter word. No plurals. Verb forms ending in "s" permitted.

TODAY'S TARGET
Good 12; **very good** 18; **excellent** 24 (or more). **Solution next Saturday.**

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

gent, germ, geum, girt, gite, grim, grime, grin, grit, grunt, grutten, gutter, meting, mung, muting, **MUTTERING**, nutmeg, reign, ring, rueing, ruing, rung, rutting, terming, tiger, ting, tinge, trig, truing, trug, tung, unrig, urge, urgent, uttering

Call **0907 181 2586** for today's Target solution
**Calls cost 80p per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. All puzzles use The Chambers Dictionary*

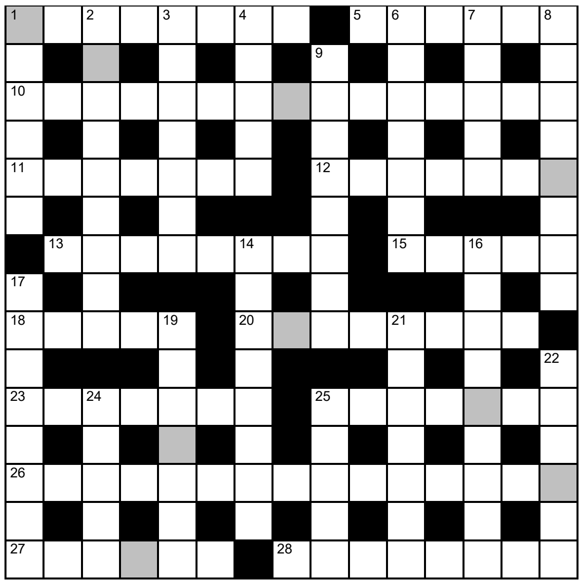
CRUSADER CROSSWORD

WIN £100

FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN £100 CASH read down the letters in the highlighted squares to reveal the mystery word

ACROSS
1 I am close, altering garment (8)
5 Saint with skin irritation and pain in the side (6)
10 Terrible burn worries fans from Cumbrian town (6-2-7)
11 Heavy metal popular with guy originally most successful (7)
12 Incident involving one Democrat – that's obvious (7)
13 E.g. deserter backing man being aimed at (8)
15 Rule for wet weather, say (5)
18 Live with head of department in good health (5)
20 Troubling Greg and Tom, a long-term loan (8)
23 A verse – one by a short Conservative pilot (7)
25 Quiet and nice, Les moves (7)
26 Louts racing to an alternative that's well done (15)
27 Dreadfully confused idler seen with head of year (6)
28 Younger relative with £1000, small, getting on (8)

DOWN
1 Graduate in county with lieutenant finding metal (6)
2 Married member and a boy initially enjoying fruit preserve (9)
3 Displaying ring in quiet part of building (7)
4 Some family in Glasgow being untruthful (5)
6 Make a mistake entering row with dog (7)
7 Subject of article – Maine (5)
8 The man's getting it before worker, uncertain (8)
9 Volunteer grabbing object from criminal (8)
14 Replacing my tree – it shows nerve (8)
16 Using one, I turned out to be clever (9)
17 Made progress in Lent (8)
19 Eccentric, taller, includes one word for word (7)
21 First to get the Spanish a can providing protein (7)
22 Class with not as much working (6)
24 Topless champion inside (5)
25 Complicated orals relating to the sun (5)



TO ENTER: Call **0904 161 3700** (calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge) and leave your answer and details, or text **DXCRUS** followed by a space, your answer, name and address details to **88833** (texts cost £1.50 plus your standard network rate). Lines close at midnight tonight. Or send your grid containing the answer in the shaded squares by posting it to: Crusader Crossword, January 31, PO Box 8694, Derby DE1 9TW. Entries must be postmarked by February 2 at the latest. For any postal enquiries, call helpline number. An extra day is given for postal entries during bank holidays. SP: Spoke – 0333 202 3390.

● ***One weekly winner will be the first random correct entry drawn from all entry routes after the closing date of midnight tonight. Competition runs Sunday to Saturday. The Editor's decision is final.***

NEED HELP? Call **0904 161 1609** for 5 extra clues! Calls cost £1.50 plus your telephone company's network access charge.

NAME
ADDRESS
POSTCODE

Weekly Crusader Crossword Winner
11-17 January: F Clark, Lincolnshire;
Please allow 30 days for prizes to arrive

LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS 1 Peruvian, 5 Repair, 10 Earth-shattering, 11 Spliced, 12 Regress, 13 Carefree, 15 Dodge, 18 Clear, 20 Linguist, 23 Nothing, 25 Slither, 26 Par for the course, 27 Spouse, 28 Premiere.
DOWN 1 Please, 2 Rerelease, 3 Vehicle, 4 Aphid, 6 Emerged, 7 Agile, 8 Register, 9 Sturgeon, 14 Relegate, 16 Discharge, 17 Schnapps, 19 Ruinous, 21 Uniform, 22 Breeze, 24 Torso, 25 Steer. **Prizeword:** Veracious.

GET THE BRILLIANT EXPRESS PUZZLES APP ON YOUR PHONE TODAY!

THE ALPHABEATER

CAN you crack the Alphabeater? It's a tough twist on our popular Alphapuzzle, designed to stretch your mental muscles to the limit. Each grid number below represents a letter or a black square. As in Alphapuzzle, every letter of the alphabet is used. But now you have to complete the grid too! Use the given letters and the given black squares below the main grid to start.

To add to the fiendish fun, Alphabeater is 'rotationally symmetrical'. In other words the grid is the same if you turn the page upside down. So, for example if there is a six-letter word Across which starts in the top left corner, there will be a corresponding six-letter word Across which ends in the bottom right corner square. Every black square has a symmetrical 'twin' but the 'twin' may not always share the same number. This can help identify other black squares. Of course if the centre square is black it has no corresponding 'twin'. Solution next Saturday.

A B C D E F G ~~H~~ I J ~~K~~ L M N O P Q R S T U V W X ~~Y~~ Z

4	33	1	33	1	10	13	33	30	19	27	39	23
25	39	11	25	15	16	6	18	38	24	28	33	34
30	27	5	2	6	3	27	23	22	26	11	30	29
18	17	28	37	39	12	3	29	12	22	33	20	14
30	24	35	19	1	25	35	16	2	35	10	40	31
35	38	19	38	14	31	7	35	33	39	23	1	7
20	2	33	28	31	29	12	37	19	16	6	16	6
20	6	14	9	1	26	17	33	3	34	8	34	19
1	12	18	27	11	38	35	21	27	26	1	30	14
36	6	24	14	25	34	7	11	17	28	40	35	29
21	4	2	30	33	14	9	1	26	10	15	35	32
10	33	37	1	40	21	1	18	1	21	37	14	40
32	6	3	26	8	1	36	28	36	35	8	1	39

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
								K			■								
21	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**28**	**29**	**30**	**31**	**32**	**33**	**34**	**35**	**36**	**37**	**38**	**39**	**40**
	H		Y													■			

Target Time: 38 minutes

Today's full solution
0907 181 2557
Extra letter clues
0907 181 2559
Today's full solution
0907 181 2557
Extra letter clues
0907 181 2559
Call for up to six extra letter clues. (Deduct three minutes for each extra letter heard.) Callers will also be given two black square numbers free of any target time penalty.
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LAST SATURDAY'S SOLUTION Black squares: 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 16, 18, 21, 23, 25, 31, 32, 34, 37. **Across:** Wrong, Track, Brand, Umpteenth, Jaw, Demob, Levy, Ajar, Mixed, Zap, Liquidate, Cover, Fling, Tsars. **Down:** Warpage, Hilly, Dye, Nodule, Kings, Approximate, Other, Ejects, Fad, Acute, Azaleas.

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Perth	**£899**	**£3,699~**
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56 Food
58 Gardening
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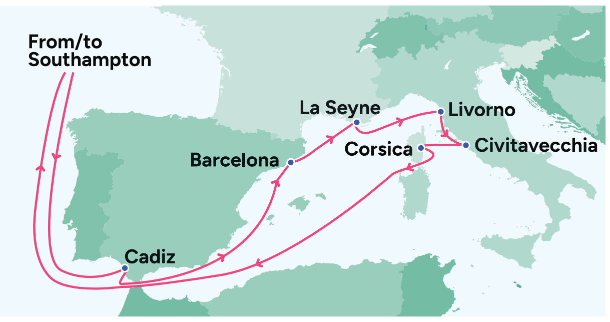

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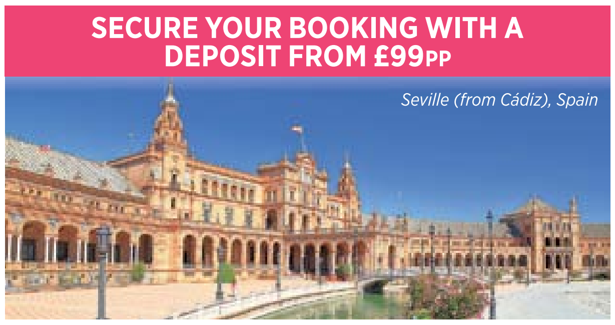
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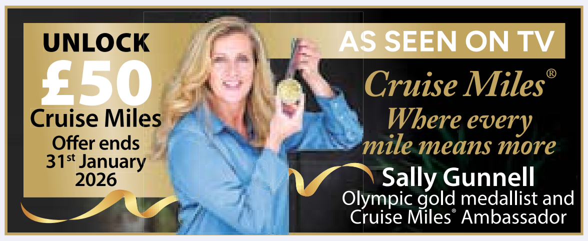
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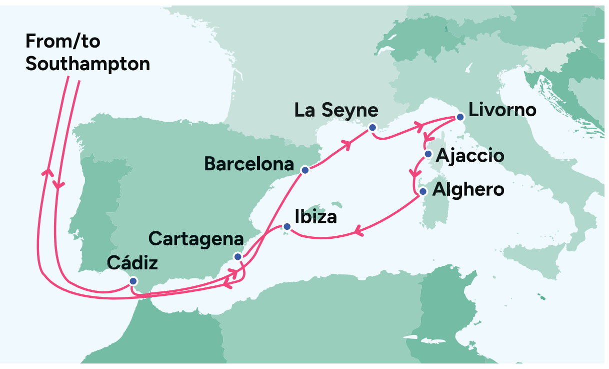

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TRAVEL EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

Edited by **JULIE DELAHAYE**

GOTHIC GLORY *St Mary's Basilica in the main square*

Perfect spot for a clean getaway

NATALIE KING explores Kraków, the world's most pristine city – 70,000 Google reviews aren't wrong

If you speak to anyone who has been to Poland, time and time again the same compliment is made about its cities. Whenever I've asked friends about their trips, they will inevitably mention that their destination was spotlessly clean.

And now it's official, one of Poland's popular city break destinations has been crowned the world's cleanest city, based on an analysis of data by Radical Storage using 70,000-plus Google reviews. Kraków beat cities in Japan, the UAE and Singapore to take the title, with 98.5% of reviews giving a positive rating to the city's cleanliness.

It's not the first time Kraków has been praised for its public spaces. In 2023, the European Commission released a report called Quality of Life in European Cities, which included surveying residents about their experiences living in their local area. In Kraków, more than 80% of residents said they were totally satisfied with their public spaces, which include parks, squares and markets, showing there's a real sense of pride in the city.

GOOD FAITH *Wawel Cathedral*

I had the chance to visit Kraków in September of last year, arriving late at night, which any solo female traveller will tell you is a bit daunting.

But even travelling to my hotel at 2am, I noticed the streets were well-lit and free of rubbish, which is always a good sign.

One advantage that Kraków has over larger cities is that it's walkable, with a compact centre that has cheap, reliable public transport to zip you around. While travelling around London at night often means taking an Uber on congested roads or braving a grubby night Tube, Kraków has regular trams through the night with short single journeys costing just 4PLN, about 80p.

Having fewer cars on the road certainly makes a difference. The city just feels much cleaner without idling traffic and more pleasant for pedestrians. A network of cycle lanes and underpasses means many residents get around safely by bike.

The next morning, Kraków was looking particularly pretty thanks to the sunny weather, and I got to appreciate the city's beauty in the daylight.

Walking around the centre, there were historic buildings on pretty much every street, and each one was beautifully preserved and well looked after.

Even visiting some of the oldest buildings, such as the Renaissance-era Cloth Hall in market square Rynek Główny, I noted they were particularly vibrant and the brickwork looked almost new. Perhaps it was the sunny weather, but the buildings didn't have the dingy, tired look that some historic places can develop over time.

Kraków is a great city for those who like to wander without too much of an itinerary in mind. Within minutes, I'd strolled down cobbled streets, found green spaces shaded by trees, and found a long path that runs along the river.

INCREDIBLE STREET ART *Old townhouses in Kazimierz, the city's Jewish Quarter*

HIGH LIFE *Wawel Hill and Vistula river*

HISTORIC *The Cloth Hall, in Rynek Główny*

In the past decade, Kraków, along with other Polish cities, has invested in waste management and clearing up its public spaces. Warsaw also managed to make it into the cleanest city rankings at number four, showing that spending the money on creating pleasant spaces pays off.

Of course, no city is perfect. One issue I had was with the sheer amount of graffiti on the buildings.

Some areas such as Kazimierz – the Jewish Quarter – have amazing street art and murals which have taken a lot of time and effort. These are not the ones that I took issue with – they were to be marvelled at rather than tutted at. However, like many European cities, Kraków seemed to have a lot of graffiti tags, even on some of its beautiful old buildings.

While its streets are swept and power-washed and its green spaces trimmed, getting rid of some of the signs of vandalism would make it even lovelier.

Still, overall I was left impressed with Krakow – it's a city where I feel like I just scratched the surface and would love to revisit one day.

BOOK IT

I stayed at the TRIBE Kraków for the short break. Rates start from £96 per night based on two adults sharing a room. Members of ALL Accor can enjoy up to 10% off public rates as well as earning reward points which can be redeemed on stays and experiences across the world. Find out more at *tribehotels.com* and *accor.com* British Airways, easyJet, Ryanair and Wizz Air are just some of the airlines offering direct routes to Kraków from UK airports including London airports, Manchester and Liverpool.

A month-by-month guide on where to holiday next...

PRETTY *Amalfi coast*

There's a getaway for every season, finds JULIE DELAHAYE in this guide to where and when to book your dream break

Get inspired for your next break away with some of the must-visit destinations in 2026, from northern Spain and its rare total solar eclipse, to this year's host nations for the Fifa World Cup...

JANUARY

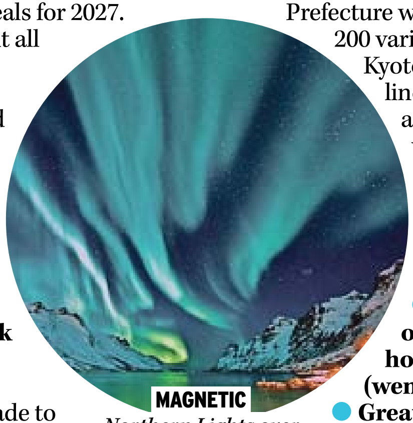
The month may be over but if you've regretted not having booked a trip to beat those post-festive blues, then the good news is that there are already plenty of deals for 2027. The Caribbean islands have it all – beautiful beaches, near-guaranteed hot and sunny weather, bustling resorts and plenty of things to do.

- **LoveHolidays has Caribbean holidays from £549pp – loveholidays.com**
- **On the Beach has Caribbean deals from £930pp – onthebeach.co.uk**

FEBRUARY

This year is the best in a decade to see the Northern Lights as it brings the solar maximum. This rare event sees the sun's heightened magnetic activity release charged particles that collide with Earth's atmosphere, creating brighter and more frequent auroras. Scientists are expecting it to peak around March this year, so in February you could still have a good chance of witnessing the aurora. Tromso in Norway is already a firm favourite thanks to its dark skies, but it also offers activities from whale watching to a tour of its Arctic Cathedral.

- **Fred. Olsen offers up Northern Lights cruises from £1,699pp (fredolsencruises.com)**
- **Loveholidays has Northern Lights packages from £139pp in 2026 (loveholidays.co.uk)**



MAGNETIC *Northern Lights over a fjord near Tromso*

MARCH

If seeing Japan's cherry blossoms is on your bucket list, March is one of the best months to go. Head to Mount Yoshino in the Nara Prefecture with over 30,000 trees and 200 varieties blooming while Kyoto's Philosophers Walk is lined with the beautiful trees and is an easy 30-minute walk. Hirosaki Park is another of Japan's best spots to watch the cherry blossoms – head to Hirosaki Castle for some of the best views.

- **Wendy Wu Tours offers eight-day holidays from £4,590pp (wendywutours.co.uk)**
- **Great Rail Journeys offers 14 days from £4,299pp in March (greatrail.com)**

APRIL

Spain starts to get warmer weather, and if you head outside of the Easter school holidays, you'll find plenty of deals and smaller crowds.

Seville is a must-visit city given its incredible food, beautiful Royal Alcazar palace and impressive Plaza de Espana, but April is a particularly exciting time to visit as its world-famous fair takes place with flamenco shows, live music, local markets and fun events – April 21-26.

- **easyJet Holidays has Seville city breaks from £472pp (easyjet.com)**
- **British Airways has Seville holidays from £410pp (ba.com)**

PARADISE *Barbados beach*

BLOOMING *Japan's blossoms*

IMPRESSIVE *Plaza de Espana in Seville*

LANDMARK *National Wallace Monument Stirling*

MAY

Fancy a UK break? Add Stirling to your list. The Scottish city recently celebrated its 900th anniversary, not to mention it was named as one of the world's best destinations to visit in 2026 by TimeOut. There's plenty of history to

AUTUMN HEAT
Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife

explore at Stirling Castle or the National Wallace Monument, as well as of picturesque walks. It's also a short drive to Edinburgh if you fancied a bit of city-hopping. Budget train operator Lumo is also set to launch a direct route from London to Stirling in spring.

- **Lumo is launching a new London to Stirling route (lumo.co.uk)**
- **Premier Inn has hotels in Stirling from £90 a night (premierinn.com)**

JUNE

Porto in Portugal has been enjoying a burst of popularity in recent years as it's become a hit with the social media crowd.

This underrated city boasts plenty of breathtaking landmarks including tiled buildings, the São Bento with intricate mosaics making up the walls, the vintage tram, the Ponte Luis bridge crossing the Douro River, and the world's most beautiful bookshop and... McDonald's.

- **Thomas Cook offers Porto holidays from £119 (thomascook.com)**
- **LoveHolidays has packages from £149pp (loveholidays.com)**

JULY

The US, Canada and Mexico will be the host nations for the 2026 Fifa World Cup, so it's no surprise that they're expected to get an influx of tourists over the month. Naturally this means bigger crowds and likely higher prices, but for sports fans it's set to make for a unique way to experience the three countries.

Host cities in Canada will be Toronto and Vancouver, while in Mexico it will be Guadalajara, Mexico City and Monterrey. Over in the US, matches will take place in Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, New York/New Jersey, Philadelphia, Seattle and the San Francisco Bay area.

- **Virgin Holidays offers US holiday packages (virginatlantic.com)**
- **On the Beach has Mexico holidays in July from £850pp (onthebeach.co.uk)**
- **Newmarket Holidays offers a wide array of Canadian tours (newmarketholidays.co.uk)**

AUGUST

For something truly spectacular, you may want to head to northern Spain to the likes of Oviedo, Gijón, Santander, Bilbao, Burgos and Zaragoza. That's because these will be the best spots in August where you can see the total solar eclipse. (Majorca is also tipped to have some great views).

- **TUI has Spain holidays from £354pp in August (tui.co.uk)**
- **Thomas Cook offers Spain breaks from £220pp (thomascook.com)**

SEPTEMBER

Italy's beautiful Amalfi Coast offers 20-28C weather that's ideal for wandering around and exploring the charming villages, eating alfresco and still getting plenty of beautiful sunset views. As the school holidays will be over, it also means that the area gets a little quieter, but as the season isn't completely done there is still plenty of atmosphere to be found in the bars, hotels and restaurants.

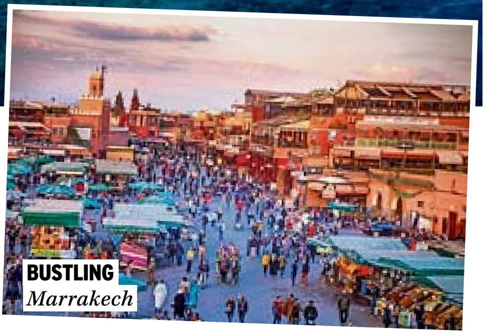
- **British Airways offers a range of Amalfi coast holidays (ba.com)**
- **Travelsphere offers an eight-day Amalfi Coast, Pompeii & Capri escorted tour from £1,599pp (travelsphere.co.uk)**

HISTORY
Bilbao Old Town

HOST CITY
New York's Manhattan

FESTIVE
Frankfurt Christmas market

POPULAR
Porto Old Town, Porto



BUSTLING
Marrakech

OCTOBER

The Canary Islands are an ideal location if you're after some hot and sunny weather, given that they can still enjoy temperatures of up to 27C. It's warm enough to enjoy the beaches and have asunset cocktail on a terrace, but cooling down enough in the mornings that you can take on the hiking trails on the beautiful volcanic landscapes too. With October half term, prices do tend to rise, but they're some of the best options closest to the UK where you can still enjoy hot weather.

- **LoveHolidays has Canaries packages from £129pp (loveholidays.com)**
- **Lastminute.com has packages from £206pp to the Canaries (lastminute.com)**

NOVEMBER

For a mix of culture, beaches and city breaks and balmy November weather, Morocco ticks all of the boxes. For beaches, head to Agadir where you'll find soft sands, a wide array of hotels and plenty of beautiful ocean views. For a city break, there's nowhere quite like Marrakech with its bustling markets, historic landmarks and beautiful riads you can call home away from home.

- **LoveHolidays has Agadir getaways from £129pp (loveholidays.com)**
- **easyJet Holidays offers Marrakech city breaks from £319pp (easyjet.com)**

DECEMBER

Fancying a Christmas market this year? Germany is Europe's jewel in the crown for festive events.

Berlin and Munich are the famous ones and hence draw in the big crowds, but if you want something a little more underrated, why not head to Esslingen?

This medieval town with its beautiful streets, twinkling lights and that all-important mulled wine packs just as much charm, without the hordes of tourists.

- **Expedia can be a good source for hotels and flights closest to Esslingen (expedia.co.uk)**

TIME TRAVEL

By **EMILY MALIA**

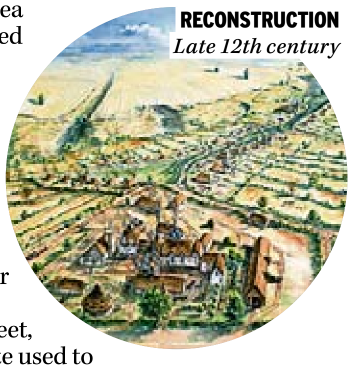
Visitors journey from all corners to glimpse one of the UK's "best preserved" medieval village, Wharram Percy in North Yorkshire, which lay deserted for centuries and now serves as a fascinating site for walkers and history enthusiasts.

It is also one of the largest abandoned medieval villages in Britain and undoubtedly the most renowned.

You can stroll through the historic grounds, taking in the remnants of age-old houses, a church and manorial ruins.

Ideally located halfway between popular attractions Scarborough Castle and Clifford's Tower in York, it makes for an excellent stopover on your trip between the two. While entry to the village is free, there is a nominal £2 charge for parking.

Over an impressive 60-year period, archaeologists have unearthed more details about Wharram Percy's history, shedding light on why the area was abandoned and what life was like here.



RECONSTRUCTION
Late 12th century

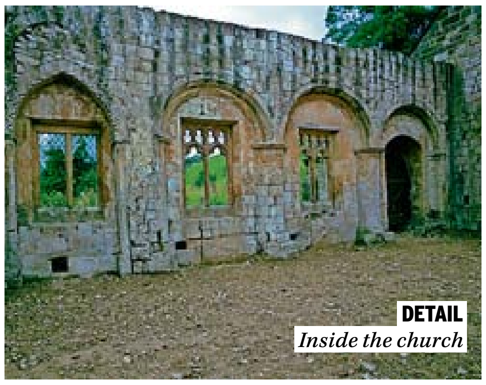
Perched on the edge of a Yorkshire valley, inbetween the A64 and A166 and near the village of Wharram Street, the unique site used to be home to its inhabitants for up to six centuries but was deserted after the 1500s.

It's believed that even today, outlines of old houses can be discerned in the ground, alongside the more substantial remains that attract curious visitors.

Experts believe the earliest settlement dates back to around 50BC. The land was subsequently transformed into farmland but lay deserted during the 5th century, before it eventually became a Middle Saxon settlement.

The village is three-quarters of a mile away from the car park, and it is steep and muddy at times. The site features rough terrain throughout, which can be challenging for some visitors and is generally unsuitable for wheelchairs or buggies.

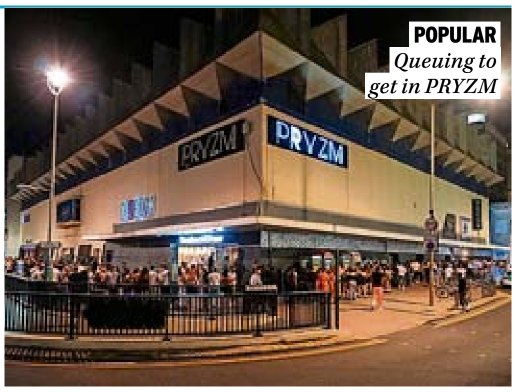
The English Heritage site is also only a 25-minute drive from the riverside ruins of Kirkham Priory just off the A64. Visit english-heritage.org.uk for more information.



DETAIL
Inside the church

PACKED *Clubbers at PRYZM nightclub*

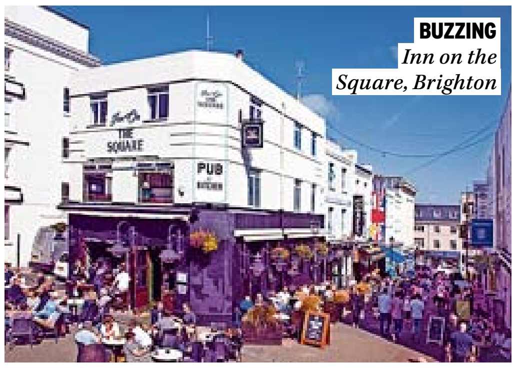
Put your hands up for Brighton



POPULAR *Queuing to get in PRYZM*

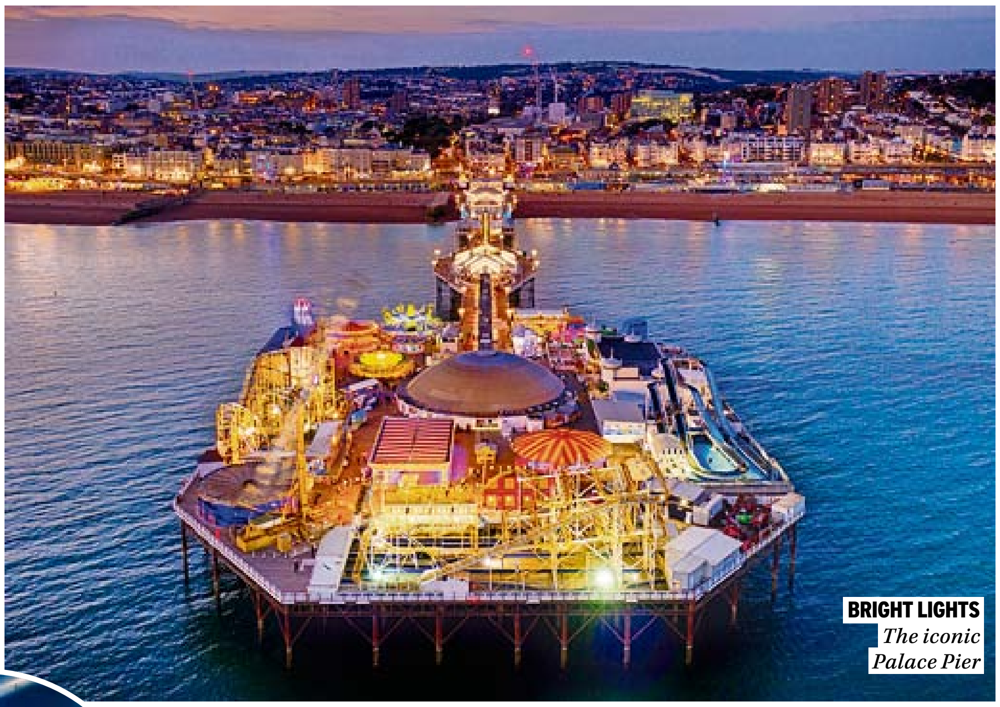
Club Revenge

FAVOURITE *The city's Club Revenge*



BUZZING *Inn on the Square, Brighton*

The city has topped a list of the best UK nights out, so here's our pick of its top venues BY NATALIE KING



BRIGHT LIGHTS *The iconic Palace Pier*

A good night out can be the perfect antidote to the January blues, and new research has now revealed the ultimate party city in the UK. We all have our favourite nightspots, and it's often based on the type of clubs and venues on offer as well as the general vibe.

UK'S TOP 10 CITIES FOR A NIGHT OUT

1. Brighton
2. Newcastle upon Tyne
3. Manchester
4. Belfast
5. Aberdeen
6. York
7. Worcester
8. Leeds
9. Edinburgh
10. Exeter

However, the travel team at Ireland Prestige Tours has decided to settle the debate once and for all and revealed Brighton has come out top.

The study looked at factors including the number of nightclubs, bars, and pubs per 100,000 people, and the average cost of a hotel for two nights based on two adults sharing. Perhaps most importantly, they also looked at the average cost of a pint.This helped the team land at a total score for each city across the UK.

The southern seaside spot came top thanks to the sheer number and variety of nightclubs and bars. And while its score for average pint price puts it on a par with London, the vibrant city scored highly based on the sheer number and variety of nightclubs, meaning it beat competition from Manchester and Newcastle.

Brighton is known for its laidback, creative vibe by day while after dark it offers a colourful and inclusive nightlife scene. Many of its clubs are just steps from the seafront, transforming from daytime bars and cafes to music venues at night.

Volks Club is one of the city's most famous nightclubs, thanks in part to its unique location under Brighton's promenade and right on the pebbly beach. On the weekends, it opens until the small hours, so in the summer you can leave just in time to watch the sun rise over the sea. And of course you can visit the Palace Pier and its bars while you're in the area.

Nearby, you'll find Patterns, with a sea-view terrace that's always busy during the summer months. By day, you can enjoy a bottomless brunch with unlimited pizza, and by night, the basement club has a lively schedule of DJ sets with genres from house to garage to soul.

PRYZM Brighton is one of the city's largest clubs, and its Wednesday nights are popular with students during term time. It also opens at weekends with three rooms playing a variety of music from chart to dance, pop, and hip-hop among many other genres. Brighton is also known for its wide variety of LGBT+ clubs, most of which are found around the Kemptown neighbourhood. Club Revenge, which is spread over three floors, is a local favourite. It makes the most of its location near the seafront thanks to its rooftop bar where you can enjoy the views.

The Haus Of Cabaret has the upmarket feel of an old-fashioned cocktail bar, and offers an immersive experience with dinner, drinks and dancing.

SECOND *Newcastle*

THIRD *Manchester*

> **'A city known for its laidback, creative vibe by day and, after dark, its nightlife is colourful'**

The city also performed well due to its huge variety of place to stay, which range from seaside B&Bs to hostels and luxury hotels on the seafront. It's no wonder it's become a popular destination for stag and hen parties, as well as groups of friends just looking for some time away.

Coming in at second and third in the rankings were Newcastle upon Tyne and Manchester, also cities with big student populations and popular for weekends away.

Belfast came in fourth, scoring particularly highly for the number of nightclubs, and in fifth place was Aberdeen which has the advantage of an average pint price of £4, compared to £6 in Brighton. For those planning a Welsh night out, while Cardiff is often a go-to for tourists, it was actually Swansea that was the top Welsh city in the rankings.

Unfortunately it only clocked in at 29th place, while Cardiff came 37th and Newport took the 42nd spot. That's not because the nightlife isn't lively – what actually let these cities down was their ranking when it came to the nightclubs, bars, and pubs per 100,000 people.

Still, if you're after a night out on the town that's cheap and cheerful then you may want to head to Gloucester. The study revealed it has the cheapest average pint cost at £2.75, meaning there's no need to be nervous when it's your time to get the drinks in.

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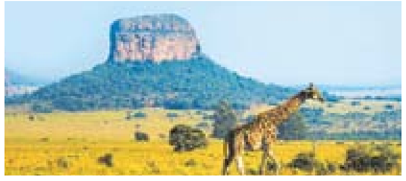

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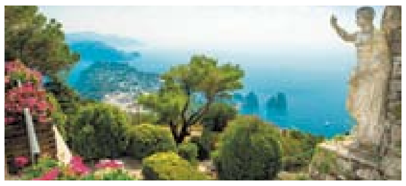

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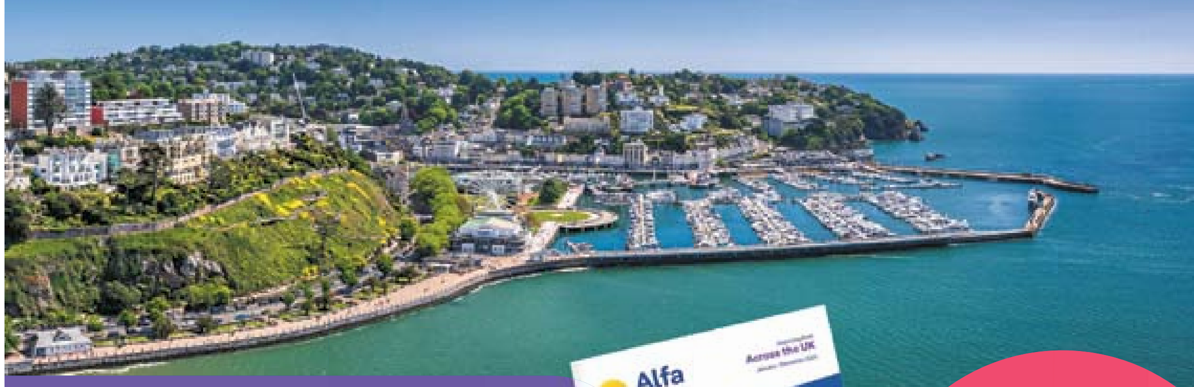

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Jazz things up with a seafood selection

Right now is the perfect time to enjoy British seafood. It's in season, good for the planet (when farmed well) and full of goodness, yet much of the fish landed in the UK is still sent abroad. Cooking seafood at home doesn't need to be complicated either – a few fresh ingredients and simple flavours are all it takes. Try something new this weekend, a quick midweek supper or a relaxed meal to share, and enjoy.

SMOKED MACKEREL & LEEK HASH WITH HORSERADISH

PREP: 10 MINS • COOK: 20 MINS • SERVES 2 • EASY

Make this mackerel and leek hash in just 30 minutes. It uses only a few ingredients and can be served in the pan, so makes a great choice on busy weeknights

- **250g new potatoes, halved**
- **2tbsp oil**
- **2 large leeks, thinly sliced**
- **100g peppered smoked mackerel, skin removed**
- **4 eggs**
- **2tbsp creamed horseradish, optional**

1 Put the potatoes in a microwaveable bowl with a splash of water, cover, then cook on high for 5 mins until tender (or steam or simmer them).

2 Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan over a medium heat, add the leeks with a pinch of salt and cook for 10 mins, stirring so they don't stick, until softened. Tip in the potatoes, turn up the heat and fry for a couple of mins to crisp them up a bit. Flake through the mackerel.

3 Make four indents in the leek mixture in the pan, crack an egg into each, season, then cover the pan and cook for 6-8 mins until the whites have set and the yolks are runny. Serve the horseradish on the side, with the pan in the middle of the table.

NDUJA-BAKED HAKE WITH CHICKPEAS, MUSSELS & GREMOLATA

PREP: 15 MINS • COOK: 20 MINS • SERVES 6 • EASY

Nduja is a spicy, spreadable pork sausage from Italy. It works really well here with either hake or cod, creating a colourful and flavoursome dish that's great for entertaining

- **2 x 400g cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed**
- **6 skin-on hake or cod fillets (about 150g each)**
- **100g nduja**
- **600g mussels, de-bearded and cleaned**
- **150ml white wine**
- **large pack parsley, leaves finely chopped**
- **finely grated zest 1 lemon, plus wedges to serve**
- **extra virgin olive oil**

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Tip the chickpeas into a large roasting tin and nestle the fish, skin-side down, among them. Dot over the nduja, and season with sea salt and black pepper. Scatter over the mussels and pour over the wine.

2 Cover the tin tightly with foil and put in the oven for 15-20 mins until the fish is cooked and the mussels have opened – discard any that stay shut. Gently lift the fish on to serving plates. Scatter the mussels and chickpeas with the parsley and lemon zest. Drizzle with olive oil, give it all a good stir and serve with the fish and lemon wedges for squeezing over.

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SPICY CLAM & KALE LINGUINE

PREP: 5 MINS • COOK: 15 MINS • SERVES 2 • EASY

This easy seafood linguine is the perfect dish to celebrate the start of the weekend. Who could resist clams, kale and an indulgent white wine sauce?

- **500g clams**
- **200g linguine**
- **2tbsp olive oil**
- **75g nduja**
- **1 fat garlic clove, finely chopped**
- **100g kale**
- **50ml white wine**
- **½ lemon, zested, then cut into wedges to serve**
- **parmesan grated, to serve (optional)**

1 Pick over the clams and discard any that are damaged or stay open when pressed shut, then rinse them in cold water. Bring a large pan of water up to the boil, then add a pinch of salt and drop in the linguine. Cook the pasta for 1 min less than pack instructions.

2 Heat the oil in a large, lidded sauté pan over a medium heat. Add the nduja and cook for 3 mins, breaking up the sausage with the back of the spoon so that it melts into the oil. Stir in the garlic, cook until fragrant, then turn up the heat to high. Add the clams and kale, pour in the wine and put on the lid. Cook for 2-3 mins, shaking the pan occasionally, until the clams open and the kale wilts.

3 Remove any clams that aren't open, then drain the linguine and toss through the sauce. Stir in the lemon zest and season well with black pepper. Serve immediately with parmesan and lemon wedges for squeezing.

DEVILLED CHARRED SWEETCORN & CRAB ON TOAST

PREP: 15 MINS • COOK: 15 MINS • SERVES 4-6 AS A STARTER • EASY

- **2tsp crispy chilli oil**
- **2 fresh corn on the cobs**
- **25g butter**
- **20g ginger, finely grated**
- **3 garlic cloves, crushed**
- **3 spring onions, finely sliced, green and white parts separated**
- **50g brown crabmeat**
- **3tbsp coconut cream**
- **1 lime, zested and juiced**
- **150g white crabmeat**
- **sourdough (gluten-free if necessary), toasted and buttered small handful of coriander, finely chopped, to serve**

1 Set a frying pan over a high heat. Brush some of the chilli oil over the corn and add cobs to the pan. Cook for 8-10 mins, turning until charred. Remove to a plate and set aside to cool. Once cool to touch, hold the charred corn cobs upright on a chopping board using tongs and slice off the sweetcorn kernels using a sharp knife.

2 Heat the remaining oil and the butter in the same frying pan over a medium heat and once melted, stir in the ginger, garlic and the white parts of the spring onions. Cook for 2-3 mins until fragrant and softened, before stirring through the brown crabmeat, charred corn, coconut cream, a pinch of the lime zest and a splash of the juice. Remove from the heat and stir through the white crabmeat and green parts of the spring onions. Season to taste and serve spooned on top of the buttered sourdough toast with the coriander scattered over.

GROW THE PLOT THICKENS

With **DAVID DOMONEY** *daviddomoney.com YouTube.com/DavidDomoney*

It's time for a garden reset

The winter months can be used for protecting and improving your patch so it can flourish

As January draws to a close, the garden can feel paused, but it's a brilliant time to get yourself organised. The best jobs now are the ones that protect plants, improve soil, and make spring work easier, without pushing growth too soon.

WELL-FED *Happy birds*

THE EASIEST WINS FOR WILDLIFE

Natural food is still limited, so keep feeders topped up with high-energy options like sunflower hearts and suet. Refresh drinking water daily, and if it freezes, melt ice with lukewarm water to avoid smashing the bowl.

Make sure you give feeders a regular clean, too, because hygiene matters when lots of birds share the same perch. If you're adding some new nest boxes, get them up now in a sheltered position, well before nesting activity increases.

Find out more about putting up nest boxes in January's episode of Step-by-Step gardening on my YouTube channel, @daviddomoney.

FEED THE GROUND

Most plants aren't ready for fertiliser yet, so think "soil first". On a dry day, spread a layer of compost, leaf mould, or well-rotted manure over borders. Keep it off crowns and stems, and avoid working frozen or waterlogged ground. This simple layer protects soil structure, reduces weed germination, and feeds gently as temperatures rise.

WATER SMARTER IN WINTER

Winter rain may not always be enough for your garden plants, particularly when they are in containers.

Wind and weak sunshine can dry containers faster than you would expect, and evergreens still lose moisture through foliage.

Check for moisture with your finger a few centimetres down, and water only when it feels dry. Aim for a mild spell, water earlier in the day, and never water when the compost is frozen solid.

QUICK SAFETY SWEEP

This is a great week for a slow walk around the garden. Gently brush any snow or frost off evergreens to prevent branches snapping. Clear leaves, algae and moss from paths to reduce slips. Remove debris from guttering on your shed and greenhouse so rainwater can run into water butts, not across paving. If you spot wind rock on new shrubs, firm the soil around the rootball and check that ties aren't rubbing.

SEED-SOWING SET-UP

Seed-sowing will ramp up soon, so clean pots and trays now, and set out labels and fresh seed compost. This is also where perlite and vermiculite earn their keep. Mix a little perlite through seed or potting compost to improve drainage and airflow, which helps prevent cold, soggy conditions.

Use vermiculite when you want steadier moisture, and you can sprinkle a fine layer over sown seeds to support even germination. Keep dust down by dampening either product before use.

Learn all this and more about perlite and vermiculite in the February episode of Step-by-Step gardening, at Blue Diamond's Bridgemere Show Gardens, on my YouTube channel, @daviddomoney.

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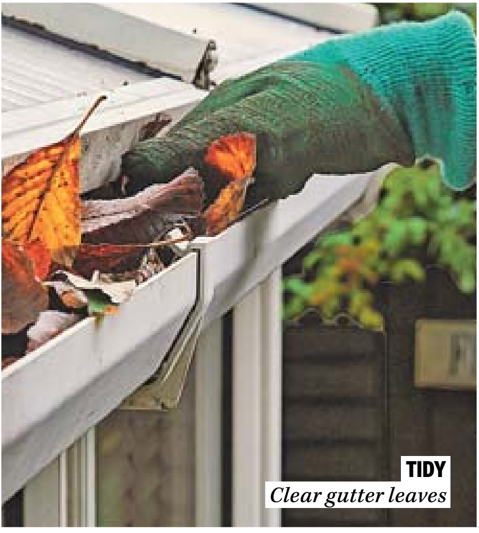
CARE
Brush snow off evergreens



TIDY
Clear gutter leaves

REMOVE
Moss from paths

CLEAN
Greenhouses

TOP 5 GARDENING JOBS

1 Chit seed potatoes in a cool, bright, frost-free place so short, sturdy shoots form before planting time. Stand tubers with the "eyes" facing up in egg boxes or seed trays, and avoid warm rooms that encourage weak, leggy growth.

2 Top-dress houseplant pots by scraping off the top couple of centimetres of tired compost and replacing it with fresh. This refreshes nutrients and improves the surface structure without disturbing roots, and it's a tidy alternative to repotting until active growth begins.

3 Move spring bulbs in pots to a bright, sheltered spot where you'll see them daily, and rotate containers every few days for even flowering. Keep compost just moist, raise pots on feet for drainage, and protect buds from hard frost by shifting pots temporarily into shelter.

4 Plan a crop rotation map now while beds are still quiet, so you can avoid growing the same plant families in the same soil year after year. Group crops by family, then sketch where brassicas, legumes, onions, and potatoes will go, leaving room for succession sowings.

5 Check drainage holes on outdoor pots and hanging baskets, clearing blockages so winter rain can escape freely. Lift pots on to feet or bricks, remove saucers outside, and knock out any soggy compost that's sealing holes because waterlogged containers are far more likely to suffer frost damage.

FOCUS ON

PRIMROSE

At this time of year, you'll often spot primrose (Primula vulgaris) and its pale yellow, five-petalled flowers tucked low to the ground. They grow at woodland edges, so copy that. Give them humus-rich, moisture-retentive soil that drains freely, with light shade.

Primula vulgaris is ideal for naturalising under shrubs, at the front of borders or along a path. For a bright display in pots and window boxes, hybrids like Primula x polyantha (polyanthus) and garden varieties like Primula acaulis bring stronger colours and sturdier clumps. If you garden in heavier soil, raised edging beds or planting through a mulch of compost helps keep crowns healthier.

Snip off collapsed flowers and remove tattered leaves. Check pots after windy weather – compost can dry fast even in winter, but never let containers sit in water. If you're planting now, choose a mild day, plant at the same depth as the pot, firm gently, and water in.

Fun fact: Primrose and cowslip are close relatives, and can cross in the wild. They produce a natural hybrid called false oxlip (Primula x polyantha or Primula x variabilis).

DID YOU KNOW?

Jasminum nudiflorum literally means "naked-flowered", because the yellow blooms open on bare green stems before the leaves arrive. It's a classic winter wall shrub, whose flowers are at their best in clear, cold weather.

Chamomile was used in historic English gardens as a scented, walkable "lawn" or path plant. When stepped on, it releases a sweet, apple-like fragrance, which is exactly why it became popular during Elizabethan times.

Beetroot has long been used as a natural dye. Its strong red-purple colour comes from water-soluble pigments called betalains, which can stain hands and fabrics and have been used to tint foods and textiles.

Viburnum x bodnantense "Dawn" is a garden-bred hybrid first raised at Bodnant Garden in Wales in the 1930s. Named after the garden, it's loved for its scented and pink blooms that can flower through winter and into early spring.

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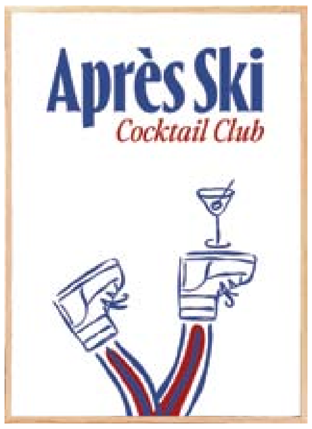

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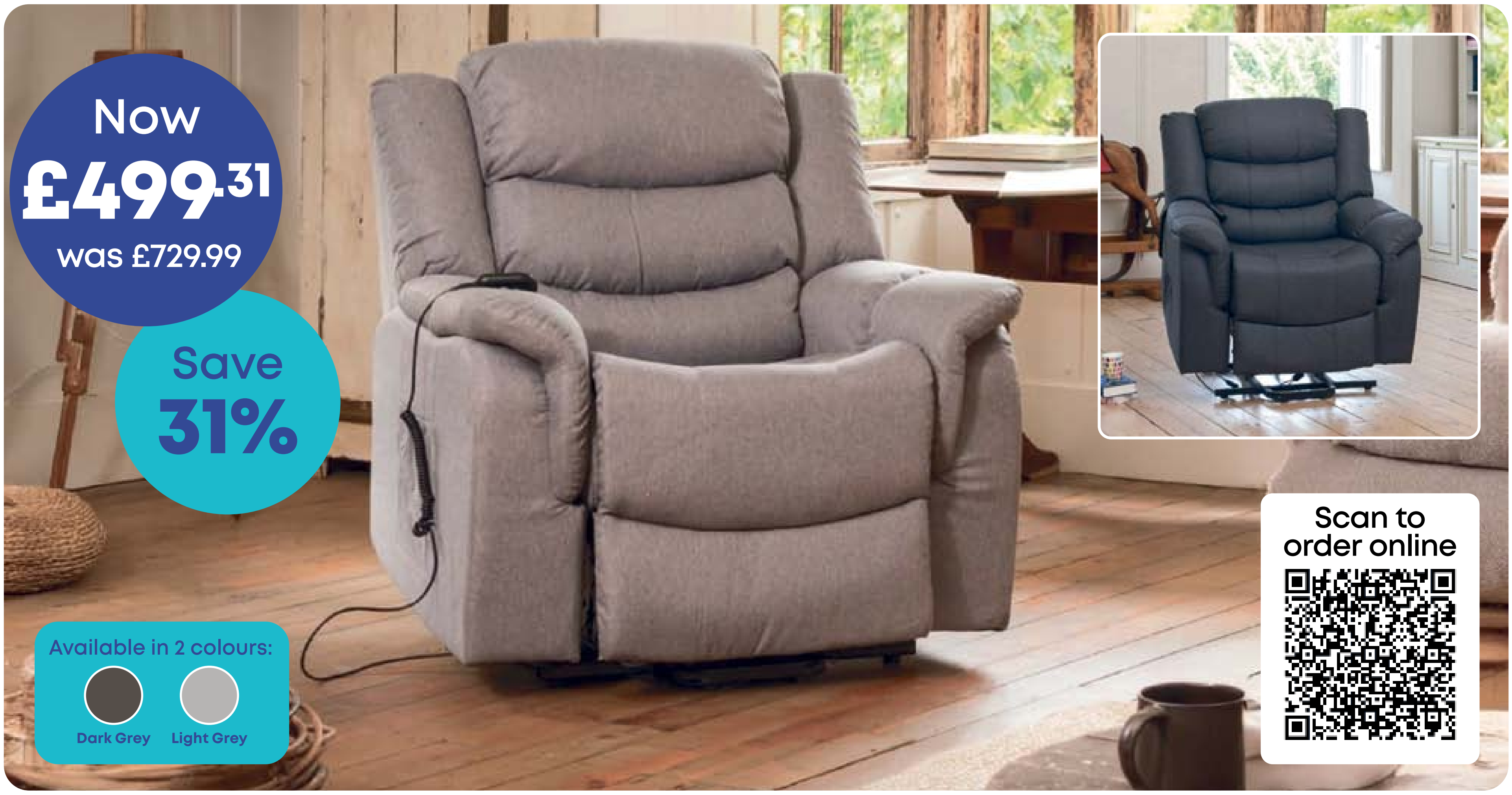

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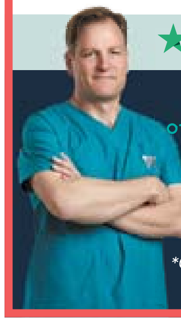

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The strong spoke tyres provide grip and stability across different surfaces, while a rear tray lets you carry bags, shopping or everyday items. The bike is suitable for people between 165cm and 195cm tall, and supports a rider weight of up to 130kg.

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Mortgage approvals plunge to lowest level in 18 months

By **Vicky Shaw**

EXPERTS believe the property market bottomed out last month as the number of home loan approvals dipped to the lowest level since June 2024.

Some 61,013 home mortgages received the nod, down from 64,072 in November, according to Bank of England figures. There were 60,920 deals agreed 18 months earlier.

Finance and property insiders expect the property market to build this year with worries over the Budget settled.

Thomas Pugh, chief economist at audit, tax and consulting firm RSM UK, said that with more certainty around property taxes and another interest rate cut likely in April, "the housing market should rebuild some momentum this year, especially as there is likely to be a degree of pent-up demand".

Rob Wood, chief UK economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said: "We think there is a good chance that approvals have troughed in December or perhaps January before they recover."

Frances McDonald, research chief at estate agent Savills, said: "With lower mortgage rates and a reduced likelihood of any further changes to the property tax system, we expect more stability for both activity and prices throughout this year." The Bank also said approvals for remortgages where homeowners moved lender rose by 1,600 to reach around 38,400 in December.

Economist Rob Wood is hopeful

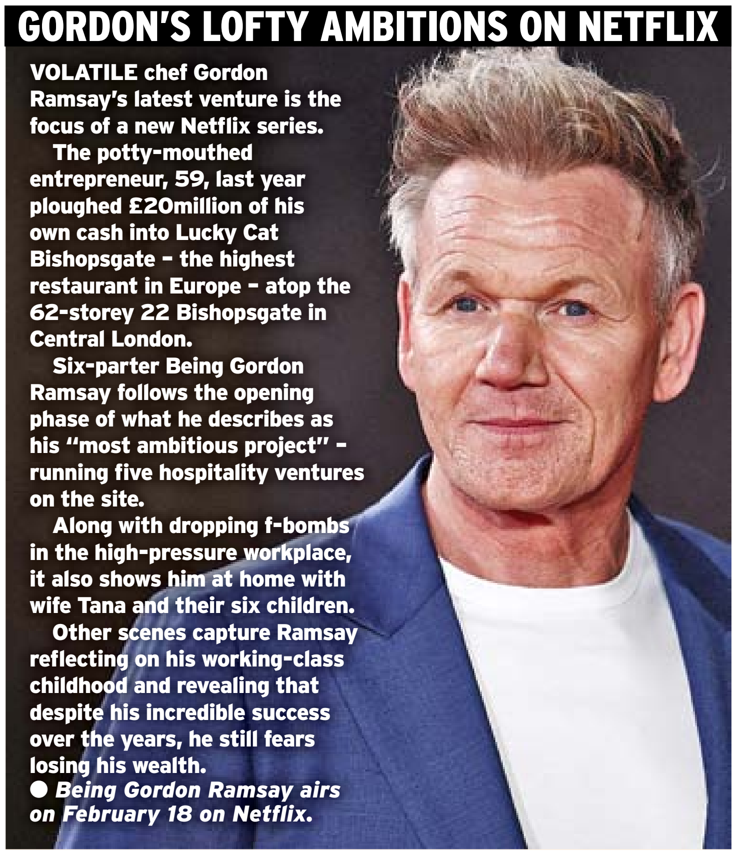
Mark Harris, chief of mortgage broker SPF Private Clients, said: "As we move towards spring, the good news for borrowers is that lenders are keen to lend and have the funds available to do so.

"Many of the big lenders have reduced their mortgage rates and while some have increased pricing in recent days, we expect rates to jump around, rather than significantly move one way or another."

Elsewhere, the Bank reported credit card borrowing increased to 12.4% in December from 12.1% a month earlier. And the amount deposited as new savings fell to £4.8bn from November's £8.8bn, reflecting Christmas spending and people preparing to settle tax bills.

A separate HM Revenue & Customs report said that 100,440 home sales went ahead in December, 5% up on a year earlier.

GORDON'S LOFTY AMBITIONS ON NETFLIX



VOLATILE chef Gordon Ramsay's latest venture is the focus of a new Netflix series.

The potty-mouthed entrepreneur, 59, last year ploughed £20million of his own cash into Lucky Cat Bishopsgate – the highest restaurant in Europe – atop the 62-storey 22 Bishopsgate in Central London.

Six-parter Being Gordon Ramsay follows the opening phase of what he describes as his "most ambitious project" – running five hospitality ventures on the site.

Along with dropping f-bombs in the high-pressure workplace, it also shows him at home with wife Tana and their six children.

Other scenes capture Ramsay reflecting on his working-class childhood and revealing that despite his incredible success over the years, he still fears losing his wealth.

● ***Being Gordon Ramsay airs on February 18 on Netflix.***

Two million are urged to fill in tax returns today

It's deadline day for returns

THE clock is ticking for around two million people who have until the end of today to file their 2024-25 tax return.

Those who miss the deadline face an automatic £100 penalty, which could be followed by further fines.

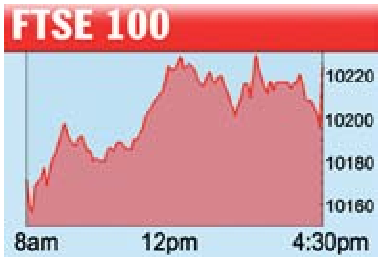
HM Revenue & Customs said that, as of Thursday, more than 10 million people had filed their return. A spokesman said: "Should anyone require help [today], our phone and webchat services are available."

Its webchat service will have 10 times the usual Saturday capacity, with its 24/7 digital assistant and gov.uk guidance available. It has enhanced this with a phone service from 9am to 4pm. People have also been warned to watch out for scams, including criminals claiming to be from HMRC and referring to unpaid tax bills or bogus tax rebates.

More information on how to get in touch with HMRC can be found at www.gov.uk/find-hmrc-contacts

++ THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 THE FTSE 100 ++

			52 WEEK	
COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	HIGH	LOW
3i Group	3351	-72	4459	2999
A.B. Foods	1905	+11½	2337	1838
Admiral Group	†			
Airtel Africa	319¼	-22½	372¾	135½
Alliance Trust	1256	+10	1324	1050
Anglo American	3408	-92	3500	2003¾
Antofagasta	3648	-138	3786	1383
Ashtead Group	4687#	-38	5594	3659
AstraZeneca	13600	+140	14346	9667
Auto Trader	538	+2¾	908½	535¼
Aviva	635¾	+¾	692½	493
Babcock International	1435	-22	1502	529½
BAE Systems	1974	+½	2093	1180½
Barclays	486¼	+6½	490½	241¾
Barratt Development	388¼	-5	482¼	350
Beazley Group	1133	+1	1170	769
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	4120	+10	4324	3524
BP	463¾	+1¼	476¼	331¾
British Amer.Tob	4376#	+49	4421	2965
British Land	414¾	-½	420½	321¼
BT Group	191¼#	+1¾	222¾	141¾
Bunzl	2048	+18	3452	1989
Burberry Group	1099	-21	1371½	627¾
Centrica	191	+1½	192¾	135¼
Coca-Cola HBC	3950	-10	4034	2788
Compass Group	2187#	+15	2843	2172
Convatec Group	230		295½	221¼
CRH	8886	-4	9704	6142
Croda International	2728	+8	3383	2465
DCC	4636	-34	5600	4350
Diageo	1675½	+37½	2428	1577
Diploma	5320#	-20	5685	3624
EasyJet	477¾	+4½	587¾	427½
Entain	605	-14	1022	501¼
Experian Group	2758#	+63	4088	2695
F&C Inv Tst	1244#	+10	1272	962
Flutter Entert.	11965	-235	23630	11705
Fresnillo	3702	-198	4448	696
Games Workshop	17050	-190	19840	12410
GlaxoSmithKline	1876½	+24½	1901½	1264
Glencore	499¼	-8¾	508	230
Haleon	379	+7¼	415¼	326½
Halma	3544#	+2	3710	2360
Hikma	1529	+12	2340	1507
Hiscox	1482	-13	1528	1035
HSBC Holdings	1285½	+15½	1285½	713¼
IMI	2762	+10	2774	1606
Imperial Brands	3066	+42	3312	2667
Informa	880	+3½	993½	640¼
InterContinental Htl	9823	-3672	10107¼	5410
Intermediate Cap.Grp	1815	-5	2450	1569
Intertek Group	4464	+10	5385	4064
Intl Consolidated Airlines	418¼	+8½	437	224½
JD Sports	81¾	-¼	104½	63¼
Kingfisher	337½	+6	337½	240¼
Land Securities	650½	-3	654	499½
Legal & General	265	-½	267¾	215¼
Lloyds Banking Grp	109	+3½	109	61¼
London & Stamford Prop	200	-2¼	204½	170½
London Stock Ex	8122	+4	12095	8042
M&G	309½	-½	311¼	172¾
Marks & Spencer	366	+2¼	411¼	318½
Melrose	626	+2¾	680	386
Mondi	854	-23½	1326	819
National Grid	1234½	+4½	1240	919¾
NatWest Group	665¼	+11¾	667½	411¼
Next	13265	+30	14580	9584
Pearson	957½	+11½	1379	929¾
Pershing Square Hold	4560	+44	5090	3244
Persimmon	1406	-28½	1449½	1037½
Phoenix Group	739½	-2½	748½	499¼
Prudential	1204½	+8½	1209	655
Reckitt Benckiser	6092	+100	6228	4633
RELX	2579	-15	4135	2576
Rentokil Initial	450¾	-8½	480¾	309½
Rightmove	494½	-1	823¾	492¼
Rio Tinto	6738	-111	6849	4117
Rolls-Royce Group	1211	+10	1305	593½
Sage Group	957½#	+2½	1348	955
Sainsbury (J)	320½	+4½	355¾	228¾
Schroders	451½	+3½	467	289¼
Scottish Mortgage	1255½	+15½	1262	815¼
SEGRO	758½	-6½	768	599
Severn Trent	2928	-7	2949	2370
Shell	2794	-3½	2931½	2291½
Smith & Nephew	1242	+28½	1435	937¾
Smiths Group	2510	+2	2638	1687
Smurfit Kappa	3024	-12	4454	2558
Spirax-Sarco	7265	-70	8190	5445
SSE	2422#		2443	1463½
St James's Place	1520	+½	1526½	791
Standard Chartered	1862	+23½	1878½	878¾
Tesco	425¼	+4½	475½	314½
Unilever	4940½	+73	6177½	4631
United Utilities	1247#	-3	1256	944½
Vodafone Group	107½#	+1	107½	64
Weir Group	3226	-38	3276	1984
Whitbread	2724	-12	3274	2335



Octopus spreads tentacles to China

OCTOPUS Energy has expanded into China in a joint venture with the country's PCG Power.

The move will allow Octopus to trade renewable energy across the world's largest clean-energy market.

The UK's largest supplier unveiled the partnership amid PM Sir Keir Starmer's visit to China.

The new business will be named Bitong Energy. The plan is for it to trade up to 140TWh (terawatt-hours) of renewable power a year – roughly equal to the entire current green energy output of the UK.

Octopus CEO Greg Jackson said: "China's investments in scale and innovation have made solar, wind energy and batteries cheaper.

"Now there's a huge opportunity for Britain to succeed as we build the solutions that use these products to cut the cost of electricity."

+ BG + Barclays + BT + Centrica + Dixons Carphone + First Group + HSBC + Kingfisher + Marks & Spencer + Next + Prudential + Rolls-Royce + Sainsburys + Tesco + Unilever + Vodafone + Whitbread + WPP

SHARES AT A GLANCE

Aerospace & Defence

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Avon Rubber	1754	-34	2180	1338
Babcock International	1435	-22	1502	529½
BAE Systems	1974	+½	2093	1180½
Chemring Group	498½	-4½	593	297½
QinetiQ Group	501½#	-4	572	361
Rolls-Royce Group	1211	+10	1305	593½
Senior	245	-4	253	115¾

Alternative Energy

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Porvair	850	-10	900	626

Banks

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Barclays	486¼	+6½	490½	241¾
Bco Santander	931	+17	941	400½
Close Brothers	505	-9	550½	266½
HSBC Holdings	1285½	+15½	1285½	713¼
Investec	608	+10½	610½	414
Lloyds Banking Grp	109	+3½	109	61¼
Metro Bank	133¼	+½	136¼	81
NatWest Group	665¼	+11¾	667½	411¼
Paragon Group	888	+9	970	686½
Standard Chartered	1862	+23½	1878½	878¾

Beverages

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Barr (AG)	638	+1	711	593
Coca-Cola HBC	3950	-10	4034	2788
Diageo	1675½	+37½	2428	1577

Chemicals

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Carclo	55½	+1	80	21
Croda International	2728	+8	3383	2465
Elementis	161½	-½	176½	115
Johnson Matthey	2360#	-6	2388	1156
Synthomer	53½	-1¼	158¼	46
Treatt	204	-2	444	186½
Victrex	656#	+1	1048	589

Construction & Materials

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Balfour Beatty	714	+2	735	390½
Costain Group	177	+¾	179½	94
CRH	8886	-4	9704	6142
Dialight	333	-7	364	101
Galliford Try	524	-6	546	321
Gleeson (MJ)	386	-7	538	320
Keller Group	1772	-2	1808	1240
Kier Group	223½		231½	115¼
Marshalls	156½	-1½	293	155½
Morgan Sindall	4930	+30	4985	2945
Severfield-Rowen	27	-1½	52¼	19
Smart (J) & Co	132½#		132½	110

Electricity

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Drax Group	901	+3	918	536½
SSE	2422#		2443	1463½
Telecom Plus	1332	-4	2085	1326

Electronic & Electrical Equipment

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Acal	634	-15	738	486
Halma	3544#	+2	3710	2360
Oxford Instruments	2515	+20	2545	1500
Renishaw	3800	+80	3875	2145
TT Electronics	112	+¾	154	73
XP Power	1240	+10	1260	621

Equity Investment Instruments

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Aberdeen Asian Sml	384	+6	385	256
Aberforth Smll.Co.	1680	+4	1686	1212
Acorn Income				
Albion Tech.& Gen. VCT	66		71	65½
Alliance Trust	1256	+10	1324	1050
Aurora Inv.Tst.	273	-3	279	212½
AVI Global Tst	260½	-1½	266½	202
Baillie Gifford Japan	904	+12	951	657
Baillie Gifford Shin Nip	135½	+1¼	138½	95½
Bankers Inv.Tst	132½#	+1¼	136	101
Baronsmead VCT.2	48½		52	45
BH Macro GBP	414		416	371½
Biotech Growth Trust	1205	-10	1285	620
BlackRock Mining	915	-81	1022	406½
Bluehone AiM VCT2	28¼		31	28¼
British Assets Tst	27¾		49¼	26¼
Brunner Inv.Tst.	1440		1490	1140
Caledonia Inv.	373	+2	391½	334½
City Natural Res.Yld	391	-34	435	165¾
City Of London	549#	+4	550	411½
Dunedin Ent.IT.				
Dunedin Income	308		312	262
Edin Wwide Inv	225½	+½	229½	143
Edin.Inv.Tst.	796#		839	680
Edin.US Tracker	380#	-1	386½	289½
Elderstreet VCT	38¾		41	36½
F&C Cap&Inc.	349	+1	354	287
F&C Inv Tst	1244#	+10	1272	962
F&C Smaller Cos	182	+¼	184¾	136½
F&C US Smaller Companies	1377½	-17½	1480	1115
Fidelity Asian	628	+8	628	454
Fidelity European	430	+4	434	338½
Fidelity Special	438	+3½	439	295½
Finsbury Gwth&In	775	+4	962	770¼
Foresight Tech.VCT	65½		75½	62
Genesis E.M.F.	1198	-8	1210	632
Graphite Ent	1534	+10	1600	1070
Hansa Tst 'A'	275		280	190
Hansa Tst Plc	274	-1	278	192½
Henderson Far Est	246½#	-1	256	190½
Henderson High Inc	196½#	-½	199½	151
Herald Inv.Tst.	2535	+5	2640	1738
HGCapital Tst.	452	-20	538	448
HSBC Infrastructure	116¾		125¼	106
Impax Env.Mkt	410		431	310½
Int.Biotech.Tst.	918	-12	996	480
International Public	127	+1¼	130	107¾
Invesco Asia	438		447	300
Invesco Perp UK	386	-3	394	313½
JPM American	1108	+8	1178	869
JPM Asian	491½#	-4½	497½	331½
JPM Claverhouse	876#	-2	888	660
JPM Emerg Mkt	146¾#	+1½	147½	95
JPM Euro Sml Co.	629#	+3	631	441½
JPM Global Emerging	186	+2	186¾	118½
JPM Indian	935#	+6	1106	904
JPM Japanese	741#		759	493
JPM Overseas IT	577	+7	609	480
JPM Smaller Co	342½	+1½	345½	253
JPM US Sml Co.	409	+2	512	338
Jupiter Euro.	924	+3	959	757
JZ Capital Partners	184	-1	220	174¼
Law Debenture	1134	+10	1136	788
Lowland Invest Co	172½#	+½	174	114½
Majedie Inv.	279		281	230
Manchester&Lon.	776	+10	944	512
Martin Currie Prtflo Tst	348#	+3	382	295
Maven Income And Growth VCT	34½		38	33½
Mercantile Inv Tst	267½#	+1	268¾	202½
Merchants Tst	628	+2	630	474
Mid Wynd Int.	762	-2	836	664
Monks Inv.Tst.	1514	+4	1554	1036
Montanaro Euro Tst	167	+½	183½	138
Montanaro Uk	105#		106½	87¾
Murray Inc.Tst.	927	+2	938	754
Murray Int.Tst	338½#	+2	339¾	239
New India	716	+6	832	684
New Star Inv.Tst.	128	+1½	131	100
North Atl.Smlr.Tst	359	+5	402	318
Northern 2 VCT	53½		57	52½
Northern Venture	56½		58½	55½
Oxford Tech 2 VCT	7		7	5½
Pacific Assets	371	+2	378	302
Pacific Horizon	897	-2	907	507
Pantheon Int.	377	+½	389	266
Pershing Square Hold	4560	+44	5090	3244
Polar Cap.Tech	497	+4	504	255½
RCM Technology Trust	546	+6	554	307
RIT Capital Partners	2195	+15	2275	1722
Ruffer Investment	302	+2	308	272½
Schroder Asia	696#	-1	702	461½
Schroder Inc.	355#		358	255
Schroder Japan	325#	+5	334	209
Schroder UK	207		211	158½
Schroder UK M&S	740#	+4	756	520
Scottish American	517	+2	525	454½
Scottish Mortgage	1255½	+15½	1262	815¼
Shires Inc.	318#	-2	324	222
Small Comp Div.Tst	136	+½	150	124
Standard Life Equity	423		425	288½
Standard Life UK Sml	517	+1	531	426
Temple Bar	383½	+2	386½	258
Templeton Emrg.	263#	+1	264¼	151¾
The European Inv.Tst	109#	+1	111½	84
Throgmorton Tst.	657	+1	664	469
TR Euro.Growth	225#	-1	229½	163
TR Prop. IT	332½	-½	338½	277½
Witan Pacific	319	+1	322	223
Wwide Healthcare	363½	+2½	397	265½

Financial Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
3i Group	3351	-72	4459	2999
3i Infrastructure	373	+2½	385	301
Abrdn	217½	-1	225¼	123¾
Ashmore Group	236½	-3½	242½	125
Guinness Peat Group	85	-¾	96	68¼
IG Group	1352	+3	1372	913
Intermediate Cap.Grp.	1815	-5	2450	1569
International Pers Fin	235	-½	237	121½
IP Group	59¼	-½	65	34¾
Jupiter Fund Man.	187½	-1½	189¾	68
Liontrust Asset Man	236	+1	458	230¼
London Stock Ex.	8122	+4	12095	8042
M&G	309½	-½	311¼	172¾
Man Group	262¾	+3	271¾	154¾
Provident Financial	119	-½	128½	51
Rathbone Brothers	2205	-10	2225	1406
S & U	2370	-30	2409½	1330
Schroders	451½	+3½	467	289¼
St James's Place	1520	+½	1526½	791
Tullett Prebon	255	-1	311½	228
Walker Crips Group	13½		14	7½

Fixed Line Telecommunications

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Airtel Africa	319¼	-22½	372¾	135½
BT Group	191¼#	+1¾	222¾	141¾

Food & Drug Retailers

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Greggs	1607	-18	2182	1418
Marks & Spencer	366	+2¼	411¼	318½
Ocado	218¼	-4¾	395½	172¼
Sainsbury (J)	320½	+4½	355¾	228¾
Tesco	425¼	+4½	475½	314½

Food Producers

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
A.B. Foods	1905	+11½	2337	1838
Anglo-Eastern	1470		1525	650
Carr's Milling	136#	-2	157	117
Cranswick	5260	+10	5490	4625
Glanbia	1377¼	-69¼	1446½	788¼
Greencore Group	289½#	+4½	297½	169¼
Kerry Grp 'A' Shs	6496¼	+17¼	8748½	6167¼
Premier Foods	188¾	+2	214½	167
REA Holdings	135½	+1½	138	61½
Tate & Lyle	376½	-¼	661	358

Gas, Water & Multiutilities

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Centrica	191	+1½	192¾	135¼
National Grid	1234½	+4½	1240	919¾
Pennon Group	546½#	-10	565	387½
Severn Trent	2928	-7	2949	2370
United Utilities	1247#	-3	1256	944½

General Industrials

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Bunzl	2048	+18	3452	1989
Goodwin	25100	+100	26100	6180
Melrose	626	+2¾	680	386
Mondi	854	-23½	1326	819
Smiths Group	2510	+2	2638	1687
Smurfit Kappa	3024	-12	4454	2558

General Retailers

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
ASOS	330½	+2½	436½	218½
Auto Trader	538	+2¾	908½	535¼
B&M Europ Value Ret	176¼	-1½	344½	155¼
Caffyns	415		500	415
Dixons Carphone	146	-2¼	149½	85¼
Dunelm	924	+½	1232	858½
Frasers Group	695½	+2	770	546
Halfords Group	150¼	-½	174½	116¼
Headlam Group	44		131	43½
Howden Joinery	837	-½	914½	679½
Inchcape	816½	-1½	823½	638
JD Sports	81¾	-¼	104½	63¼
Kingfisher	337½	+6	337½	240¼
Next	13265	+30	14580	9584
Pets At Home	204½	-3½	273¼	192¾
RM Group	105		115	82
Topps Tiles	42#	+¼	50	29
WH Smith	675#	+4	1307	613½

Health Care Equipment & Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Convatec Group	230		295½	221¼
Flying Brands	+½		1¾	+½
Smith & Nephew	1242	+28½	1435	937¾

Household Goods & Home Construction

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Barratt Development	388¼	-5	482¼	350
Bellway	2716	-24	2982	2166
Berkeley Grp Hldgs	4120	+10	4324	3524
Bovis Homes	665¼	-¾	701	510¾
Mcbride	160½	+2¾	163	107
Persimmon	1406	-28½	1449½	1037½
Reckitt Benckiser	6092	+100	6228	4633
Taylor Wimpey	106¾	-¼	123¼	93

Industrial Engineering

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Bodycote	745½	-5½	772	460½
Hill & Smith	2230	+5	2360	1530
IMI	2762	+10	2774	1606
Morgan Crucible	229	-1	274	177½
Northgate	382	-1½	395	273½
Rotork	353½	+1	355¾	275¾
Spirax-Sarco	7265	-70	8190	5445
Vesuvius	459½	-4½	479	313¾
Weir Group	3226	-38	3276	1984
Xaar	110	+1	145	59

Industrial Metals & Mining

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Castings	274	-2	319	234
Evraz				
Ferrexpo	76	-1	110¾	44¼

Industrial Transportation

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Braemar Shipping Serv	217	+5	275	201
Clarkson	4190	+45	4505	2995
FirstGroup	186½	+1	233	146½
Fisher (J) & Sons	448	+9	448	285

Leisure Goods

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Games Workshop	17050	-190	19840	12410
Photo-Me Intl.	138½	-1¼	230	132

Life Insurance

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Aviva	635¾	+¾	692½	493
Chesnara	305½	-2	309	212¾
Legal & General	265	-½	267¾	215¼
Phoenix Group	739½	-2½	748½	499¼
Prudential	1204½	+8½	1209	655

Media

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
4imprint Group	4080	+15	6030	3035
Bloomsbury Publish.	497	+13	666	468
Future	541½#	+10	1029	492½
Informa	880	+3½	993½	640¼
ITV	81¼	+¾	87¾	66¼
Pearson	957½	+11½	1379	929¾
Reach	64	+¾	88¼	53
STV Group	115	+5	202	103
Wilmington Group	298	+8	387	289
WPP Group	301¾	+5¼	787¾	269

Mining

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Anglo American	3408	-92	3500	2003¾
Anglo Pacific	145¼#	-5½	152½	50
Antofagasta	3648	-138	3786	1383
BHP Billiton	2535	-63	2598	1609½
Endeavour Mining	4222	-296	4542	1536
Fresnillo	3702	-198	4448	696
Gem Diamonds	3	+¼	12	2¾
Glencore	499¼	-8¾	508	230
Hochschild Mining	676	-33	750½	175½
Kenmare Res.	245½	-12½	436	227
Petra Diamonds	15	-¾	30½	10½
Rio Tinto	6738	-111	6849	4117

Mobile Telecommunications

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Vodafone Group	107½#	+1	107½	64

Nonequity Investment Instruments

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Oryx Int.Gwth.	1250	-2½	1392½	1042½
Rights &Iss.Inc	2090	+20	2220	1670

Nonlife Insurance

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Admiral Group				
Beazley Group	1133	+1	1170	769
Hiscox	1482	-13	1528	1035
Lancashire	616	+5	694	523

Oil & Gas Producers

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
BP	463¾	+1¼	476¼	331¾
Cairn Energy	259	+14	319½	183
Enquest	12½	+¼	16½	9¾
Gulf Keystone Pet.	182	-¼	224½	148¾
Harbour Energy	232½	-2½	243¼	151¼
Shell	2794	-3½	2931½	2291½
Soco International	21¾		25	18
Tullow Oil	8	-¾	21½	4

Oil Equipment, Services & Distribution

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Hunting	442	-11	453	246½
John Wood Group	26		72½	17¼

Personal Goods

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Burberry Group	1099	-21	1371½	627¾
PZ Cussons	73	+1½	88¼	66
Unilever	4940½	+73	6177½	4631

Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
AstraZeneca	13600	+140	14346	9667
Genus	3160	+105	3170	1548
GlaxoSmithKline	1876½	+24½	1901½	1264
Haleon	379	+7¼	415¼	326½
Hikma	1529	+12	2340	1507
Ovoca Gold				
Oxford Biomedica	831	-19	913	232½

Real Estate Investment & Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Boot (Henry)	193	+1	237	189
Cardiff Property	2700#		2750	2540
CLS Holdings	62½	+2½	75	53½
Foxtons	53½	+½	67¾	50¾
Harworth Group	164	+2	189½	159½
Mountview Est.	9000	-25	10200	8700
Panther Secs.	290		315	280
Rightmove	494½	-1	823¾	492¼
Savills	1078	+4	1110	871
Wynnstay Props.	860		900	695

Real Estate Investment Trusts

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Big Yellow Group	1030	+2	1180	848
British Land	414¾	-½	420½	321¼
Capital & Counties	143½	-½	161¼	113½
Derwent London	1922	-29	2096	1608
Grainger	194#		228	177½
Great Portland Est.	374	+3½	374	262
Hammerson	354½	-4	362½	220½
Helical Bar	193½	-2½	240	174
Land Securities	650½	-3	654	499½
London & Stamford Prop	200	-2¼	204½	170½
Primary Health	103½#	-¾	106	87½
SEGRO	758½	-6½	768	599
Town Centre	122	+½	149	118
Unite Group	566	-6½	879½	510
Value & Income	201¾#	-3¼	215	173
Workspace Group	419½#	-2	473½	362

Software & Computer Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Computacenter	3328	+40	3368	2122
Intec Telecom				
Microgen	270	-20	344	255
Moneysupermarket	186½	+2	221½	180½
Pendragon	472	+86½	558	296
RELX	2579	-15	4135	2576
Sage Group	957½#	+2½	1348	955
Triad Group	291		400	240

Support Services

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Ashtead Group	4687#	-38	5594	3659
Capita Group	376½	-7½	407½	175
DCC	4636	-34	5600	4350
Diploma	5320#	-20	5685	3624
Essentra	101	-¼	126¼	89¾
Experian Group	2758#	+63	4088	2695
Ferguson	18440#	+180	19470	11670
Hays	47½	+1½	88¼	45
Intertek Group	4464	+10	5385	4064
Johnson Service	140½	-½	159½	124
London Security	2850		3800	2600
Macfarlane Group	72	+1	120½	62¾
Mears Group	367½	-2	417½	311½
Michael Page	205½	+4¼	341¼	193
Mitie Group	167½#	-½	171½	112
Norish	24	+½	24	14
Paypoint	533	-27	853	438½
Rentokil Initial	450¾	-8½	480¾	309½
Robert Walters	125		296	116
RS Group	670	+14½	670	487¼
Serco Group	300	-4¼	306	152
SIG	9¾	+¼	18	8½
Smiths News	68½#	+1¼	77½	47½
Speedy Hire	25½	+½	32¼	18
SThree	194	+2¾	278	137½
Travis Perkins	625½	-4½	714	494
Trifast	75¼	-2½	87½	59
Vitec Group	12½	+¼	125	11

Technology Hardware & Equipment

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
BATM Advanced	15¼	-¼	19¾	13

Tobacco

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
British Amer.Tob	4376#	+49	4421	2965
Imperial Brands	3066	+42	3312	2667

Travel & Leisure

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
888 Holdings	24¾	+¼	73¾	21
Carnival	2158	-32	2406	1134
Celtic	200		205	142½
Compass Group	2187#	+15	2843	2172
Domino's Pizza	182	-1¼	302¾	167¼
EasyJet	477¾	+4½	587¾	427½
Entain	605	-14	1022	501¼
Flutter Entert.	11965	-235	23630	11705
Fuller Smith & Turner	674	-16	738	508
Heavitree	220		280	200
InterContinental Htl	9836½	-11	10121¼	5417½
Intl Consolidated Airlines	418¼	+8½	437	224½
Irish Continental Uts	557½	-7½	578¾	380
Marston's	60½		69	33¼
Mitchells & Butlers	263½	-½	291½	208½
National Express	23¼	-1½	73½	21
Rank Group	88	-1	160½	78
Saga	520	+20	524	117½
Wetherspoon (JD)	670½	+2	804	541
Whitbread	2724	-12	3274	2335

AIM

COMPANY	CLOSE	+/-	52 WEEK HIGH	52 WEEK LOW
Alumasc Group	244	+6½	395	230
Arbuthnot Banking	872½		1100	837½
Boohoo	25	+1¼	29¼	10½
Camellia	4880		6050	4090
Churchill China	395		710	324
CML Microsystems	254	-11	335	210
Colefax Group	1150		1170	750
CPP Group	76½	+1¾	162	60
Cropper (James)	388	+8	400	132½
Falkland Islands	245#		316¾	162½
Fevertree Drinks	871	+11	998	671½
Filtronic	189	+6	196	82½
James Halstead	137½	+2½	174½	133
Mothercare	1¾		4¼	1¾
Mpac Group	370	-5	565	270
Naked Wine	71	-½	93½	43
Nichols	1015	+5	1465	930
Northamber	31#		34	26¼
Portmeirion	99		189	94
Regal Petroleum	16½	-½	23½	14½
Rockhopper Exploratn	70½	+½	87¾	33¼
Ten Alps	47½		73	46½
Titon Holdings	95		97½	69
Volex	441½	-3½	470	198¾
Young & Co Brewery A	833	-12	992	714

# Ex-dividend * Ex-rights a Ex-All c Ex-capitalisation † Shares suspended

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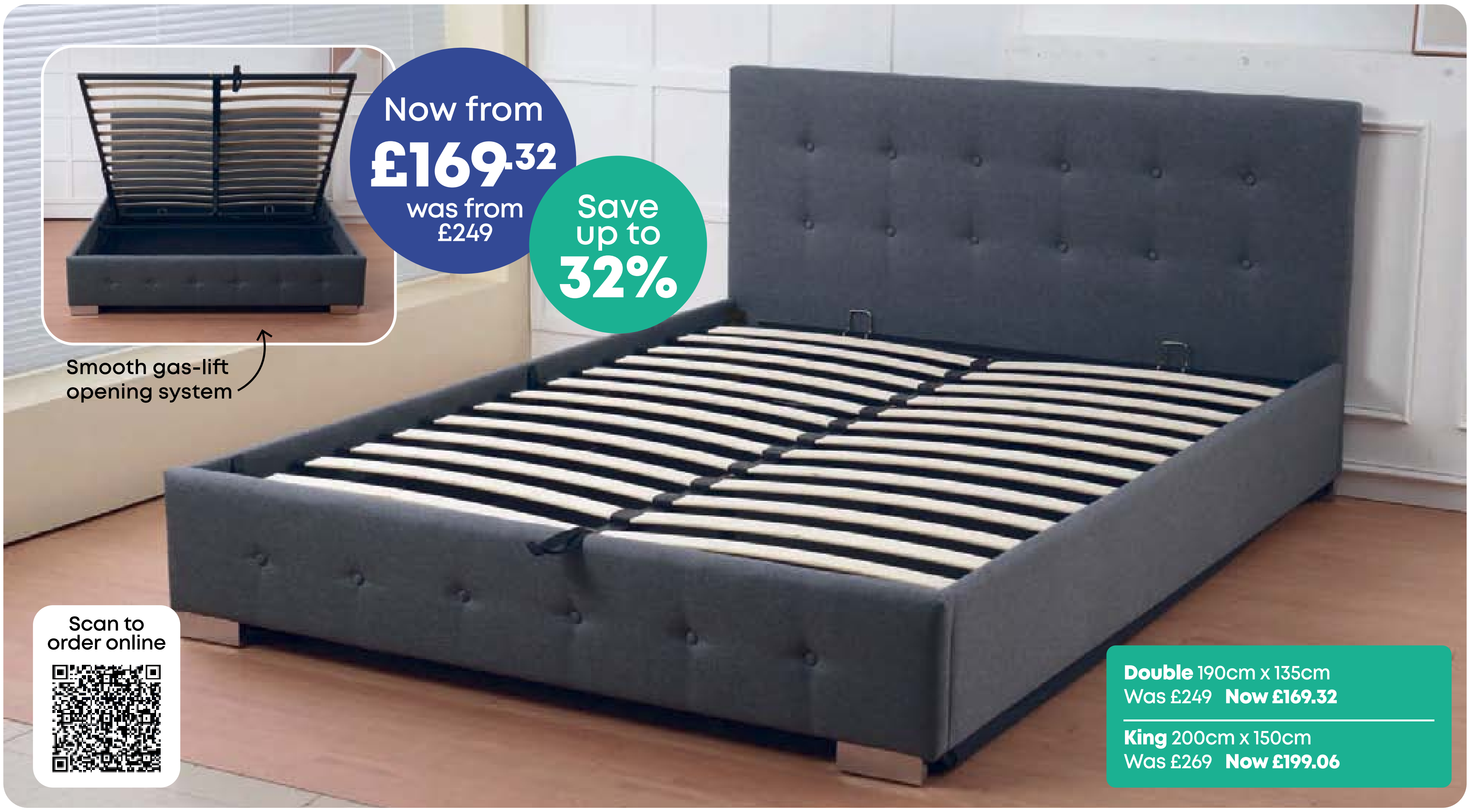

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Racing

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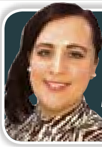
A GOOD KAL
Kala Conti can make it three from three over fences

CON-QUEST

Elliott's novice to outsmart Kitzbuhel in Scilly Isles



THE SCOUT
MELISSA JONES
Britain's top tipster

KALA CONTI (2.40) can kick on past Kitzbuhel in the Grade One Virgin Bet Scilly Isles Novices' Chase at Sandown Park.

Gordon Elliott's mare is two from two over fences at Cork's right-handed circuit, where she bounded away from Kargese in a Grade Two event last month.

Although the runner-up appeared to need the outing, Kala Conti impressed with her attitude in the closing stages and this 2m 4f race was nominated as her target.

Trainers are creatures of habit and Elliott, right, bagged the contest with Gerri Colombe – for the same owners Robcour – three years ago.

Heavy ground is no problem for **SPIKE JONES** (3.10), an each-way play at odds of 25-1 in the 11-runner Virgin Bet Heroes Handicap Hurdle.

Twice a winner on such terrain, Sam Drinkwater's charge appeared to find Windsor too sharp a test most recently and is off a featherweight of 9st 12lb with Benjamin Macey's claim.

Beaten half-a-length by leading contender **Titan Discovery** at Cheltenham's Christmas meeting, he receives an extra 3lb from that rival and he has scored at similar tracks.

In his prime at the age of seven, **FORTUNATE MAN** (3.42, nb) could give Harry Cobden a boost in the Virgin Bet Masters Handicap Chase at Sandown Park.

Two weekends ago the top jockey missed out on Jonbon's Grade One BetMGM Clarence House Chase success at Ascot for his new boss JP McManus.

A horse on the upgrade for Jonjo and AJ O'Neill, Fortunate Man is at the right end of the handicap with just 10st 2lb on his back.

With his mark edging down, **RATH GAUL HILL** (2.02) is fancied to capitalise in the Virgin Bet Every Saturday Money Back Handicap Chase, while **BOLLIN THOU** (12.55) should bring up a four-timer in the 2m 4f novices' handicap hurdle.

After bumping into a well-handicapped opponent on his chasing debut, **SOLDIEROFTHESTORM** (1.25) is backed to go one place better.

At Musselburgh, John McConnell brings out the blinkers for **MOON D'ORANGE** (2.20), just 1lb above his last winning mark after being a little out of sorts this winter.

However, the chaser came good at this time last year and might be perked up by the new headgear and a different track to Cheltenham.

Fellow Irish raider **SECRET FORCE** (1.10) gets the vote in the bet365 Scottish Triumph Hurdle, but **STAR OF GUITING** (1.43) can strike back for the home team in the bet365 Scottish County Handicap Hurdle.

If Leopardstown beats the weather, **GALOPIN DES CHAMPS** (3.30) has a fourth Paddy Power Irish Gold Cup lined up and **ROMEO COOLIO** (2.55) is hard to oppose in the Grade One Goffs Irish Arkle Novice Chase.

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NEWCASTLE SKYSPORTSRACING

THE SCOUT

4.25	Londoner	6.25	Springbok
4.55	Water Of Leith	6.55	FULL GAS
5.25	Majestic Dane	7.25	Jkr Cobbler
5.55	The Green Man		

4.25 HANDICAP
£9,631 (Class 3)1m 2f 42yds (7 declared)

1	(5)	54320-2	● **LONDONER (10) (C&D,F) (T)** D & C Kubler 6 9-12	**Jack Doughty**	92
2	(6)	32512-0	**ZRYAN (15)** D O'Meara 5 9-11	**C Fallon**	91
3	(3)	4/61L2-L	**GOOD MORNING ALEX (18) (C)** D & N Barron 5 9-7	**P Mulrennan**	92
4	(2)	LOOOLL-	**INTINSO (J161) (C)** Craig Lidster 6 9-7	**Shane Gray**	58
5	(4)	42102-4	**PRIDE OF DONEGAL (28) (F)** C Johnston 4 9-5	**J Mitchell**	93
6	(7)	112/02-L	**INAPPROPRIATE (30) (D)** J O'Keeffe 5 9-1	**B Garritty**	87
7	(1)	L0146-3	**HAVEYOUMISSEDME (11) (C)** I Jardine 8 8-13	**A Mullen**	★94

BLINKERS: No. 6 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: No. 1.

SP FORECAST: 6-4 Londoner, 7-4 Pride Of Donegal, 13-2 Haveyoumissedme, 7 Zryan, 20 Good Morning Alex, 25 Inappropriate, Intinso.

2025: No corresponding race.

4.55 HANDICAP
£4,397 (5) 5f (10)

1	(7)	858857-	**PAL JOEY (43)** B Haslam 4 9-9	**P Mulrennan**	78
2	(4)	2623-13	**EMPEROR'S SON (18) (D)** R Fahey 5 9-9	**W Fentiman(5)**	78
3	(8)	3806-6L	**LION'S HOUSE (15) (C,D)** Miss L Perratt 5 9-7	**Kaiya Fraser**	75
4	(3)	92153-5	**I NEED YOUR LOVE (25)** M & D Easterby 4 9-5	**B Garritty**	79
5	(2)	43451-2	**OUR ABSENT FRIENDS (11) (C&D)** T Davidson 8 9-5	**O McSweeney**	80
6	(5)	30422-7	**GANESHA (11) (C&D)** Phillip Makin 5 9-4	**R Scott**	79
7	(9)	2L3056-	**LUCIUS AURELIUS (107)** K Ryan 4 9-2	**Shane Gray**	★81
8	(1)	67664-2	● **WATER OF LEITH (12) (C&D)** J Goldie 8 9-2	**Lauren Young(5)**	76
9	(10)	L3LL19-	**WRESTLING REVENUE (106) (D)** B Haslam 5 9-1	**A Mullen**	76
10	(6)	56381-5	**LATIN FIVE (30) (C&D)** P Midgley 9 8-5	**A Jary(3)**	77

VISOR: Nos. 1, 2, 4 TONGUE STRAP: No. 1.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Water Of Leith, 7-2 Our Absent Friends, 6 I Need Your Love, 13-2 Emperor's Son, 10 Ganesha, Lucius Aurelius, 12 Others.

2025: Buzz Box 4-9-6, Billy Loughnane 5-2 Fav (B Smart), drawn (5), 9 ran.

5.25 MAIDEN STAKES
£5,400 (4) 7f 14yds (5)

1	(2)	23-	**CERELIA (34) (T)** W Haggas 4 9-11	**C Fallon**	★73
2	(5)		**DERRYGARRAN LAD** J Camacho 3 8-12	**R Scott**	–
3	(1)		**HENRY HALFLIGHT** L Bailey 3 8-12	**B Garritty**	–
4	(3)		● **MAJESTIC DANE** K R Burke 3 8-12	**Shane Gray**	–
5	(4)		**AURELUNE** R Fahey 3 8-7	**C Hardie**	–

SP FORECAST: 11-8 Cerelia, 9-4 Majestic Dane, 5-2 Aurelune, 12 Derrygarran Lad, 50 Henry Halflight.

2025: Power Fizz 3-8-12, Cieren Fallon 4-5 Fav (W Haggas), drawn (3), 8 ran.

5.55 HANDICAP
£5,653 (4) 7f 14yds (9)

1	(8)	811296-	**WAR HOWL (120) (D)** B Haslam 4 9-9	**P Mulrennan**	★92
2	(3)	1447-LR	**NORTHERN SPIRIT (11) (C)** B Ellison 6 9-7	**B Robinson**	89
3	(2)	23402-7	**BENACRE (20) (C&D)** C Johnston 6 9-5	**O Stammers**	89
4	(9)	04617-6	**BEATTIE IS BACK (11) (C&D)** R Fahey 7 9-2	**E Tindall(7)**	91
5	(4)	088LL-6	**ABDUCTION (15) (D)** J Goldie 8 9-0	**Kaiya Fraser**	90
6	(7)	1541-32	● **THE GREEN MAN (18) (C&D,F)** P Kirby 7 9-0	**A Brookes**	90
7	(5)	27800-5	**MIDNIGHT'S DREAM (10) (D) (T)** R Varian 5 8-12	**J Mitchell**	89
8	(6)	L/L0LL-3	**SPACE COWBOY (29) (C) (T)** R Spencer 7 8-12	**C Hutchinson**	87
9	(1)	132/27-9	**KITAAB (7) (C)** P Kirby 7 8-8	**C Hardie**	83

BLINKERS: No. 7 VISOR: No. 6
TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: No. 8.

SP FORECAST: 6-4 The Green Man, 9-2 Space Cowboy, 13-2 Midnight's Dream, 8 War Howl, 10 Benacre, 12 Beattie Is Back, Northern Spirit, 14 Abduction, 20 Kitaab.

2025: No corresponding race.

6.25 HANDICAP
£4,711 (6) 1m 5yds (12)

1	(11)	8-22131	**RELEVANT RANGE (7) (C&D)** I Furtado 7 9-11	**Elle-May Croot(5)**	70
2	(3)	6L327-5	**MERCURIUS POWER (14) (C&D)** Jessica Macey 8 9-9	**E Tindall(7)**	70
3	(5)	L066-LL	**FAR AHEAD (14)** R Fahey 4 9-9	**H Russell**	★79
4	(8)	5732-14	**TRAIS FLUORS (21) (C&D)** Miss L Perratt 12 9-7	**A Jary(3)**	68
5	(12)	94485-3	● **SPRINGBOK (30)** R Fahey 4 9-7	**J Garritty**	68
6	(9)	6774-53	**ANNANDALE (9) (C&D)** J Goldie 8 9-6	**P Mulrennan**	68
7	(4)	1451-23	**WYVERN (9) (C&D)** P Morris 7 9-6	**D Nolan**	69
8	(7)	22L4-37	**DREAM ILLUSION (9)** M Herrington 4 9-6	**D E Hogan**	68
9	(2)	27022-5	**LITTLE TED (11) (C&D)** T Easterby 9 9-6	**S B Kirrane**	70
10	(10)	0L83-23	**PALLAS LORD (18) (C&D)** D Whillans 8 9-6	**R Scott**	68
11	(1)	88438-0	**VOLENTI (30) (C&D)** B Haslam 7 9-5	**A Mullen**	72
12	(6)	5355-34	**ALPINE SIERRA (7) (C,D)** J Goldie 8 9-1	**Lauren Young(5)**	70

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 10 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 7, 9.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Relevant Range, 6 Springbok, 8 Annandale, Alpine Sierra, 10 Pallas Lord, Wyvern, Trais Fluors, Little Ted, 12 Others.

2025: Volenti 6-9-2, Andrew Mullen 11-4 Fav (B Haslam), drawn (5), 9 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Paul Mulrennan 14% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** R Fahey 12% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 6.55 Henriette Ronner (blinkers). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 4.55 Emperor's Son(hcp), I Need Your Love(hcp). 5.25 Cerelia. 5.55 The Green Man(hcp). **DRAW:** High numbers have a slight advantage over 5f. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Serengeti Sunrise** (7.25) Ireland; **Londoner** (4.25) 285 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 5.55 **War Howl** from M Appleby to B Haslam.

6.55 HANDICAP 3YO
£3,768 (6) 6f (8)

1	(6)	7-45	**EVOLVE (18)** R Fahey 9-9	**D Nolan**	62
2	(5)	844L51-	**GOLDEN HAVANA (46) (C)** M Dods 9-6	**S B Kirrane**	68
3	(1)	0754-	● **FULL GAS (60)** K Ryan 9-6	**O McSweeney**	65
4	(8)	5843-L	**HENRIETTE RONNER (10) (T)** W Haggas 9-2	**C Fallon**	71
5	(2)	8561-71	**SURGEON COMMANDER (9) (C)** Craig Lidster 9-2	**Shane Gray**	★72
6	(7)	6460-52	**FAITHFUL DREAM (5)** M Appleby 9-1	**Joanna Mason**	70
7	(4)	374-223	**MADEMOISELLE BELLE (9) (F)** B Ellison 8-13	**B Robinson**	70
8	(3)	6LL14-5	**CONTAINER EXPRESS (14) (C&D)** P Kirby 8-9	**A Brookes**	68

BLINKERS: Nos. 2, 4, 5.

SP FORECAST: 3 Mademoiselle Belle, 4 Faithful Dream, 9-2 Surgeon Commander, 11-2 Golden Havana, 7 Full Gas, 10 Henriette Ronner, Evolve, 12 Container Express.

2025: Frankies Dream 9-9, Joey Haynes 6-4 Fav (J Candlish), drawn (6), 7 ran.

7.25 BET 10 GET 40 WITH BETMGM HANDICAP
£3,768 (6) 7f 14yds (11)

1	(7)	405133-	**MINSHAAR (43) (C&D)** R Fahey 4 9-9	**W Fentiman(5)**	70
2	(4)	07647-1	**LORD CAPULET (21) (C&D)** K Ryan 4 9-9	**Shane Gray**	72
3	(8)	33698-5	● **JKR COBBLER (15) (C&D)** I Jardine 7 9-8	**A Mullen**	65
4	(5)	06030-2	**BOOK OF LIFE (21) (D)** P Morris 6 9-8	**D Nolan**	71
5	(1)	733/L54-	**AMELIA'S JOY (43)** M Herrington 4 9-8	**D E Hogan**	67
6	(3)	4211-66	**CORAMENTO (8) (C&D)** D Thompson 5 9-7	**Joanna Mason**	69
7	(2)	5733-41	**ANA EMARAATY (7) (C&D)** J Goldie 6 9-6	**P Mulrennan**	68
8	(6)	7375-72	**ARDADDY (7) (D)** G Tuer 4 9-6	**O Stammers**	69
9	(10)	0332-52	**INSTANT BOND (11) (T)** M Wigham 5 9-4	**B Robinson**	71
10	(11)	3727-74	**PIT BOSS (7)** L Bailey 4 9-3	**B Garritty**	★73
11	(9)	920090-	**SERENGETI SUNRISE (50) (D)** R K Watson (IRE) 5 8-9	**C Hardie**	52

BLINKERS: No. 7 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 9, 10
CHEEK PIECES: No. 10 HOOD: No. 5.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 Ana Emaraaty, 5 Instant Bond, Ardaddy, 6 Lord Capulet, 8 Minshaar, 10 Coramento, Pit Boss, Jkr Cobbler, 12 Others.

2025: Our Dagger 4-9-4, Oisin Orr 10-3 (D Bourke), drawn (4), 9 ran.

AFTERNOON RESULTS

CATTERICK: Soft-heavy in places

1.10—BELAYA RIVER (Paul O'Brien, 7-1) 1; Whatsgoingonmarvin (13-2) 2; Shamsat (11-2 2nd fav) 3. 9 ran. 1½l, 5l. (Harry Derham; 4-9 fav Square D'alboni). Tote: £9.80; pl £1.80, £1.70, £1.50. exacta: £61.10. trifecta: £218.90. CSF: £52.87. Non-runner: Blondina.

1.40—ALWAYS A REASON (R Chapman, 5-4 fav) 1; Ailt An Chorrain (2-1 2nd fav) 2; Zero Tolerance (4-1) 3. H'cap 5 ran. shd, 25l. (R Menzies). Tote: £2.25; pl £1.30, £1.40. exacta: £5.00. trifecta: £11.20. CSF: £4.43.

2.10—DEVON SKIES (J Williamson, 18-5 2nd fav) 1; Abbey Scope (4-1) 2; Avalon Beach (9-2) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 1¾l, 2¾l. (P Kirby; 7-2 fav Byron Hill). Tote: £5.10; pl £2.40, £2.60. exacta: £22.20. tricast: £64.92. trifecta: £85.70. CSF: £18.49. Non-runner: Maggies Boy.

2.40—STICK WITH ME SAM (B Hughes, 4-7 fav) 1; Jiair Madrik (16-1) 2; Forcetoreckonwith (11-4 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 5 ran. 6l, 4l. (T R Gretton). Tote: £1.58; pl £1.10, £5.10. exacta: £11.10. trifecta: £23.00. CSF: £9.30.

3.13—BO CRUZ (T Gillard, 4-1) 1; Court At Slip (10-3 jt 2nd fav) 2; West Lawn (8-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 10l, 15l. (D McCain; 2-1 fav Fortunefavorsdbold). Tote: £5.00; pl £2.40, £1.60. exacta: £18.30. tricast: £100.04. trifecta: £68.00. CSF: £18.30. Non-runners: Azof Des Mottes, Community Rebel.

3.48—BORN IN THE WEST (J England, 7-4 fav) 1; Colonial Empire (13-2) 2; Rioja Alta (7-1) 3. H'cap 8 ran. 1¾l, 2l. (S England). Tote: £2.75; pl £1.30, £1.90, £2.20. exacta: £17.30. tricast: £65.22. trifecta: £65.90. CSF: £14.30. Non-runner: Asa.

4.23—KAZAR FOREZ (J Thompson, 8-11 fav) 1; Voodoo Angel (9-1) 2; Berry Edge (25-1) 3. H'cap 5 ran. 1½l, 7l. (M Hammond). Tote: £1.73; pl £1.10, £2.00. exacta: £5.50. trifecta: £15.20. CSF: £7.59.

Jackpot: £5,057.30
Placepot: £87.40
(Race 1) 1, 8, 5; (2) 5, 3; (3) 5, 6; (4) 2, 1; (5) 4, 2; (6) 2, 5, 3.
Quadpot: £9.80

FFOS LAS: Heavy-soft in places

1.20—JACCOURS (S Bowen, 5-2 2nd fav) 1; Tommy Pickles (9-2) 2; Karma Police (15-2) 3. 8 ran. ½l, 4½l. (O Murphy; 11-10 fav Buddy Holly). Tote: £3.50; pl £2.50, £2.30, £3.60. exacta: £17.80. trifecta: £89.30. CSF: £15.11.

1.50—THE HAWKSTONIAN (B R Jones, 13-2) 1; Emerald Breeze (12-1) 2; Turenne (8-11 fav) 3. 8 ran. ¾l, 2¾l. (B Pauling). Tote: £9.40; pl £1.90, £2.70, £1.10. exacta: £66.00. trifecta: £329.20. CSF: £81.29. Non-runners: Paradise Park, Wispit Twob.

2.20—FOLLOWANGO (Isabel Williams, 11-2) 1; Astronomic View (11-2) 2; Illogical Logic (8-1) 3. H'cap 7 ran. ¾l, 5l. (E Williams; 9-4 fav Dangerous Touch). Tote: £6.50; pl £3.00, £2.30. exacta: £30.00. tricast: £242.63. trifecta: £175.30. CSF: £36.13. Non-runner: Flemenstide.

2.50—SPARKLING DUKE (B R Jones, 10-1) 1; Klic Boum (7-2 2nd fav) 2; Stellar Stream (18-1) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 7½l, 3l. (K Woollacott; 10-3 fav Lady Henrietta). Tote: £13.50; pl £3.20, £1.50, £4.90. exacta: £74.00. tricast: £637.25. trifecta: £1155.40. CSF: £46.70. Non-runner: Hot Rod Lincoln.

3.25—STAMINA CHOPE (Lee Edwards, 15-2) 1; Benignitas (14-1) 2; Seasmoke (9-2) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 4l, 10l. (Dave Roberts; 7-2 jtfav Fay Ce Que Voudras, 7-2 jtfav Lady Harriett). Tote: £8.50; pl £2.10, £6.00, £1.60. exacta: £125.60. tricast: £530.89. trifecta: £938.60. CSF: £100.35.

4.00—EL GAVILAN (R Patrick, 5-4 fav) 1; Shade Of Winter (7-1) 2; Face d'Music (12-1) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 2l, 6l. (C Boultbee-Brooks). Tote: £2.25; pl £1.30, £3.60. exacta: £13.50. tricast: £71.64. trifecta: £58.90. CSF: £10.74. Non-runner: Reinado.

4.35—EL ROJO GRANDE (Shane Quinlan, 11-4 2nd fav) 1; Hawk Stone (11-2) 2; Leech (10-1) 3. H'cap 6 ran. 3l, 1¾l. (Katy Price; 5-2 fav Gwennie May Jem). Tote: £3.75; pl £1.60, £2.60. exacta: £16.00. trifecta: £128.90. CSF: £18.23. Non-runner: Bobbi's Beauty.

Placepot: £367.20
(Race 1) 3, 7, 4; (2) 5, 3, 8; (3) 5, 3; (4) 3, 4, 6; (5) 5, 2, 1; (6) 7, 1.
Quadpot: £137.70

SOUTHWELL: Standard

1.02—FILLY FODEN (K O'Neill, 10-3) 1; Blue Deveron (4-1) 2; Pure Passion (16-1) 3. 6 ran. nk, 2¾l. (B Millman; 7-4 fav Arlo's Girl). Tote: £4.34; pl £2.40, £1.80. exacta: £17.40. trifecta: £72.60. CSF: £17.19. Non-runner: Von Trotter.

1.32—FROSTMAGIC (Mason Paetel, 5-1 jt 2nd fav) 1; King Of York (20-1) 2; Tonal (11-10 fav) 3. H'cap 11 ran. nk, 2l. (I Mohammed). Tote: £6.00; pl £1.60, £5.10, £1.20. exacta: £53.40. tricast: £190.67. trifecta: £244.80. CSF: £106.19.

2.02—BETTIES BAY (Mason Paetel, 3-1 jt fav) 1; Northern Attitude (13-2) 2; Minnesota Lad (9-1) 3. H'cap 11 ran. ¾l, 1l. (James Owen; 3-1 jtfav Clover Time). Tote: £4.00; pl £1.80, £2.80, £3.40. exacta: £22.70. tricast: £164.95. trifecta: £350.00. CSF: £24.01. Non-runner: Tommytwohoots.

2.32—SAYTARR (D Muscutt, 11-2 2nd fav) 1; Mereside Diva (14-1) 2; Chola Empire (10-1) 3. H'cap 12 ran. ½l, 2l. (James Horton; 9-4 fav Brazilian Rose). Tote: £6.50; pl £2.10, £6.50, £3.30. exacta: £98.50. tricast: £784.05. trifecta: £1029.70. CSF: £84.74.

3.03—DOCTOR KHAN JUNIOR (P J McDonald, 10-3) 1; Legal Reform (9-1) 2; Down To The Kid (9-4 jt fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. ½l, ½l. (G Oldroyd; 9-4 jtfav Talis Evolvere). Tote: £4.34; pl £1.80, £1.90, £1.40. exacta: £29.00. tricast: £82.47. trifecta: £152.60. CSF: £33.40.

3.38—AAJEJ (S D Bowen, 11-2) 1; Trojan Soldier (6-1) 2; Military Cross (2-1 fav) 3. H'cap 7 ran. nk, 1¼l. (S & E Crisford). Tote: £6.50; pl £2.20, £3.20. exacta: £39.50. tricast: £87.17. trifecta: £167.20. CSF: £37.20. Non-runner: Don Simon.

4.10—VELVET RED (R Scott, 25-1) 1; Rogue Identity (6-4 fav) 2; Beachborough Girl (7-1) 3. H'cap 11 ran. 1¼l, 1l. (Charlie Clover). Tote: £33.30; pl £7.60, £1.10, £2.20. exacta: £108.10. tricast: £323.87. trifecta: £754.10. CSF: £62.70. Non-runner: Lawmans Blis.

Placepot: £133.80
Quadpot: £49.70

THE SCOUT

12.20 Ionian
12.55 Bollin Thou
1.25 Soldierofthestorm
2.02 Rath Gaul Hill
2.40 Kala Conti
3.10 Spike Jones
3.42 FORTUNATE MAN (nb)

JACKPOT: www.totepoolliveinfo.com - Inspection 7.30am

12.20 'NATIONAL HUNT' NOVICES' HURDLE
£7,804 (3) 1m 7f 216yds (6 declared)

1 510-1L **CRACKERJACQUE (57)** A Honeyball 6 11-6... **S Twiston-Davies** 125
2 112-291 **SINCHI ROCA (16)** S Hosie 6 11-6.......... **C Deutsch** 128
3 U6313U **THE CISTERCIAN (20) (D)** S Edmunds 6 11-6... **C Hammond** ★129
4 **GRAND TETON** N Henderson 5 11-0.......... **J Bowen** –
5 66 ● **IONIAN (36)** N Henderson 5 11-0.......... **N De Boinville** 114
6 F2 **WISPIT TWOB (69)** M Keighley 4 10-2....... **Harry Atkins(7)** 120

TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 HOOD: No. 5.

SP FORECAST: 15-8 Sinchi Roca, 7-2 Crackerjacque, 4 Ionian, 9-2 The Cistercian, 7 Grand Teton, 16 Wispit Twob.

2025: No corresponding race.

12.55 NOVICES' HANDICAP HURDLE
£7,804 (3) 2m 3f 178yds (6) ITV1

1 217-221 **PRECIOUS METAL (49)** 5 12 0.......... **G Sheehan** 111
Runs: 6 Wins: 2(S,GS) Places: 3 £24,377
Trainer: Miss H Knight Owner: Moores Metals And Philip Moore

2 182-633 **TENNESSEE TANGO (35)** 6 11 12.......... **Doubtful**
Runs: 6 Wins: 1(G) Places: 3 £6,492
Trainer: J Tizzard Owner: The Tennessee Ten

3 4473-1 **CALME OLYMPIEN (107) (D)** 7 11 10... **J Bowen** 115
Runs: 5 Wins: 1(G) Places: 1 £15,068
Trainer: T Vaughan Owner: The Pant Wilkin Partnership 004

4 42P-P18 **ZAINY CHAMP (36)** 7 11 2.......... **L Williams** 118
Runs: 7 Wins: 1(S) Places: 1 £6,043
Trainer: J Scott Owner: Mr I F Gosden And Mr Dj Coles

5 3/534-35 **HOT GODDESS (23)** 6 11 1........ **Harry Atkins(7)** 114
Runs: 7 Places: 1 £3,230
Trainer: M Keighley Owner: Two Sisters

6 L-P4111 ● **BOLLIN THOU (12) (D,F)** 8 10 13.. **H Cobden** ★119
Runs: 9 Wins: 3(S,GS) £10,169
Trainer: Nick Scholfield Owner: D Charlesworth & D Turner

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 5-4 Bollin Thou, 7-2 Precious Metal, 4 Calme Olympien, 13-2 Zainy Champ, 8 Hot Goddess.

2025: Sole Solution 7-11-11, Charlie Deutsch 3-1 Fav (V Williams), 8 ran.

GUIDE: BOLLIN THOU is on a real upward curve at present and, although this is much tougher than the race he won last time out at Lingfield (2m4f, sft), the eight-year-old is taken to do the business while evidently on good terms with himself. **Precious Metal** boasts a progressive profile and warrants consideration stepping up in distance, while fellow handicap debutant **Calme Olympien** isn't easily dismissed after opening his account at Ffos Las (2m4f, gd) in October.

1.25 NOVICES' LIMITED HANDICAP CHASE
£10,406 (3) 2m 4f 15yds (7) ITV1

1 2224-L2 **EL GRANJERO (22)** 7 11 10.......... **R Patrick** 134
Runs: 15 Wins: 3(S) Places: 7 £28,622
Trainer: C Boultbee-Brooks Owner: C & C Boultbee Brooks

2 2F-L2L1 **MON CHAMPION (5)** 6 11 5(7ex).......... **Doubtful**
Runs: 13 Wins: 2(S) Places: 5 £58,901
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Ferguson, Geoghegan, Mason, McNeill

3 884-012 ● **SOLDIEROFTHESTORM (19)** 8 11 3.. **J O'Neill Jr** ★136
Runs: 15 Wins: 3(S,GS,G) Places: 5 £19,970
Trainer: J & A O'Neill Owner: Mr Tom Bond

4 2421-23 **NORN IRON (30)** 8 11 1.......... **H Cobden** 133
Runs: 9 Wins: 1(G) Places: 5 £25,307
Trainer: Harry Derham Owner: Dr Paul Kelly

5 322-2L3 **RISK DE PLUIE (22)** 7 11 0... **S Twiston-Davies** 132
Runs: 14 Wins: 2(S) Places: 4 £16,447
Trainer: Ben Clarke Owner: Beard, Ford And Langford

6 L6-12LL **LYLIAN (65)** 5 10 11.......... **F Mitchell(3)** 120
Runs: 9 Wins: 1(S) Places: 2 £41,255
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: Mr T Jacobs And Mrs E Avery

7 442-11P **RIP WHEELER (36) (D)** 6 10 5.......... **C Quinn** 132
Runs: 11 Wins: 3(G) Places: 2 £9,953
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: Mr B D Haynes & Partner

BLINKERS: No. 7 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 4, 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 1.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Risk De Pluie, 3 El Granjero, 7-2 Norn Iron, 6 Soldierofthestorm, Rip Wheeler, 10 Lylian.

2025: No corresponding race.

GUIDE: Rip Wheeler has won two of his last three starts and is now tried in first-time blinkers, so is a must for the shortlist, while **Norn Iron** and **Soldierofthestorm** aren't out of it either. **EL GRANJERO** could be worth taking a chance on, though, despite the burden of top-weight. He ran a cracker to finish second at Exeter (3m, gd-sft) last time and might be able to dictate matters here and gallop his rivals into submission dropping in trip.

2.02 BACK HANDICAP CHASE
£26,015 (2) 1m 7f 99yds (11) ITV1

1 11F3/P4 **HADDEX DES OBEAUX (35)** 9 12 0..... **T Gillard** 147
Runs: 15 Wins: 5(S,G) Places: 3 £97,406
Trainer: D McCain Owner: Mr J Fyffe

2 FP14-44 **GUNSIGHT RIDGE (49) (C&D)** 11 11 11.. **G Sheehan** 151
Runs: 24 Wins: 6(S,G) Places: 8 £105,635
Trainer: O Murphy Owner: Mrs Diana L Whateley

3 L08-529 **MARTATOR (49) (C)** 9 11 9.......... **C Deutsch** 149
Runs: 35 Wins: 7(S,G) Places: 6 £404,502
Trainer: V Williams Owner: Camilla Norton

4 3P1-214 **JAX JUNIOR (43)** 7 11 8.......... **T Cannon** 150
Runs: 12 Wins: 4(GS,G) Places: 2 £46,848
Trainer: L Wadham Owner: Mrs Cheryl Burton

5 L2-2212 **ESCAPEANDEVADE (14) (F)** 10 11 2.. **H Cobden** ★152
Runs: 28 Wins: 7(S,GS) Places: 8 £78,139
Trainer: Harry Derham Owner: Mr Jonathan Gregory

6 341L-U6 **CLASSIC MAESTRO (14)** 8 10 13....... **L Scott(3)** 150
Runs: 21 Wins: 7(S) Places: 5 £54,711
Trainer: J Candlish Owner: Classic Maestro Partnership

7 L2-5552 **KOTMASK (28) (C&D)** 8 10 12.......... **C Quinn** 149
Runs: 28 Wins: 6(S,GS) Places: 7 £141,322
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: Aura Racing

8 3222-42 **DENEMETHY (22)** 8 10 6.......... **J Hogan** 149
Runs: 16 Wins: 3(S,GS) Places: 5 £29,044
Trainer: F O'Brien Owner: Middleham Park Racing XLIX

9 068LL3 **DR T J ECKLEBURG (13)** 8 10 3.......... **C Ring** 148
Runs: 35 Wins: 6(S,GS) Places: 7 £109,390
Trainer: E Williams Owner: Mrs Janet Davies

10 11/16-83 ● **RATH GAUL HILL (33)** 8 10 2
S Twiston-Davies 149
Runs: 14 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 2 £42,669
Trainer: S Drinkwater Owner: Mr Kevin Price

11 34-2L13 **HYPOTENUS (14) 7 10 2.......... Taylor Fisher** 146
Runs: 20 Wins: 2(G) Places: 4 £39,821
Trainer: J Tickle Owner: Mr David Roseby

BLINKERS: No. 7 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 8, 10
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10.

SP FORECAST: 4 Jax Junior, 5 Gunsight Ridge, 11-2 Escapeandevade, 6 Kotmask, Dr T J Eckleburg, 8 Rath Gaul Hill, 12 Martator, 14 Haddex Des Obeaux, Classic Maestro, 16 Others.

2025: Gunsight Ridge 10-11-6, Gavin Sheehan 11-1 (O Murphy), 6 ran.

GUIDE: Jax Junior looked particularly good when beating Jeriko Du Reponet at Kempton (2m2f, gd) before not performing to expectations when bleeding from the nose in a Grade 2 at Ascot (2m3f, sft) just before Christmas. A subsequent wind operation should aid his cause, but a chance is taken with top-weight **HADDEX DES OBEAUX**. Third in the 2023 Tingle Creek (1m7f, hvy) behind Jonbon, things didn't go to plan after that and he returned nearly two years later when pulled up in the Shloer (2m, sft) at Cheltenham. He ran a much better race in the Castleford (1m7f, sft) when a mistake at the last didn't help his cause and further improvement appears likely. Last year's winner (hvy) **Gunsight Ridge** completes the shortlist.

2.40 NOVICES' CHASE (GRADE 1)
£56,950 (1) 2m 4f 15yds (4) ITV1

1 1153-11 **KITZBUHEL (36)** 6 11 7.......... **H Cobden** 161
Runs: 9 Wins: 5(S,G) Places: 1 £124,596
Trainer: W P Mullins (IRE) Owner: Mrs J Donnelly

2 227-L31 **MIAMI MAGIC (30)** 7 11 7.......... **C Hammond** 145
Runs: 12 Wins: 4(GS,G) Places: 3 £66,771
Trainer: S Edmunds Owner: Mr D Hague

3 11DL-11 **SIXMILEBRIDGE (50) (D)** 7 11 7.......... **K Woods** 159
Runs: 11 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 2 £49,969
Trainer: F O'Brien Owner: The Megsons

4 227L-11 ● **KALA CONTI (55)** 6 11 0.......... **J Bowen** ★166
Runs: 12 Wins: 6(S) Places: 3 £127,004
Trainer: G Elliott (IRE) Owner: Robcour

TONGUE STRAP: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 10-11 Kitzbuhel, 2 Kala Conti, 9-2 Sixmilebridge, 20 Miami Magic.

2025: Handstands 6-11-7, Ben Jones 10-3 (B Pauling), 4 ran.

GUIDE: KITZBUHEL didn't miss a beat when impressing in the Kauto Star (3m, gd) on Boxing Day and the conditions of this race look ideal before a potential bid at Cheltenham. Connections have booked Harry Cobden, who has ridden a bit more for the Closutton maestro in the past year, and the fact he has proven himself to be versatile regarding ground conditions is a huge positive. **Kala Conti** was impressive when beating Kargese at Cork (2m1f, sft) and that form received a decent boost when the latter won over the Festive period. She has to be a major threat, especially with the 7lb mares' allowance, while **Sixmilebridge** and **Miami Magic** are both more than useful in their own right.

3.10 HANDICAP HURDLE (PREMIER HCAP)
£56,270 (1) 2m 7f 103yds (11) ITV1

1 1/521-56 **SANTOS BLUE (35)** 9 12 0.......... **B Sutton(5)** 140
Runs: 23 Wins: 7(S,GS) Places: 5 £70,211
Trainer: O Murphy Owner: Mr N Sutton

2 42/511P- **RED DIRT ROAD (322) (C&D)** 9 11 12.. **J O'Neill Jr** 143
Runs: 10 Wins: 5(S,G) Places: 2 £96,284
Trainer: J & A O'Neill Owner: Dan Walker

SANDOWN RACINGTV

Premier Raceday

3 26/71-01 **TITAN DISCOVERY (50) (C)** 8 11 6.. **L Harrison** 138
Runs: 13 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 4 £86,255
T: R L Llewellyn O: Glastonburys, Valentine, Bibby And Pag

4 4120-32 **HENRI THE SECOND (28) (C&D)** 9 11 4.. **H Cobden** 143
Runs: 15 Wins: 4(S,GS,G) Places: 4 £100,261
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Martin Broughton & Friends 7

5 4139-13 **ROARING CONQUEST (48)** 7 11 3..... **G Sheehan** 140
Runs: 9 Wins: 3(S,GS,G) Places: 1 £26,491
Trainer: O Murphy Owner: Gary Allsopp & Mark James

6 122-12L **HARTINGTON (30)** 7 11 1.......... **J Tudor** 141
Runs: 10 Wins: 2(S,G) Places: 4 £61,333
Trainer: J Tizzard Owner: The Wychwood Partnership

7 L/82-0L3 **GABBYS CROSS (28)** 11 10 12.......... **J Bowen** ★146
Runs: 30 Wins: 5(S) Places: 5 £121,591
Trainer: Nick Scholfield Owner: Mr J P McGrath

8 00-0455 **MINELLA MISSILE (13)** 8 10 8.. **Isabel Williams** 140
Runs: 13 Wins: 3(GS,G) £40,755
Trainer: E Williams Owner: Mrs Janet Davies

9 P314-31 **PARTY VIBES (49)** 8 10 6.... **S Twiston-Davies** 127
Runs: 16 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 4 £55,336
Trainer: H Daly Owner: Richard Johnson Racing Party Vibes

10 36-23F7 ● **SPIKE JONES (13) (D)** 9 10 3.... **B Macey(5)** 142
Runs: 23 Wins: 5(S,GS,G) Places: 6 £49,181
T: S Drinkwater O: Drinkwater Family & Cheltenham Boys

11 211-3L5 **SOLE SOLUTION (9) (C)** 8 10 2.......... **N Fox(5)** 145
Runs: 9 Wins: 4(S) Places: 1 £23,297
Trainer: V Williams Owner: Sir John Timpson

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 10 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 8, 10, 11.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Henri The Second, 4 Hartington, 7 Roaring Conquest, 8 Red Dirt Road, Titan Discovery, 10 Party Vibes, Santos Blue, 14 Minella Missile, Gabbys Cross, 20 Others.

2025: Red Dirt Road 8-11-2, Jonjo O'Neill Jr 13-2 (J & A O'Neill), 13 ran.

GUIDE: HENRI THE SECOND relished the return to hurdling when a short-head second over 2m4f at this venue (gd) earlier in the month and Paul Nicholls' gelding should only benefit from this step up in trip. With that in mind, the nine-year-old is hard to oppose. **Hartington** was second in a competitive handicap at Haydock (3m, gd-sft) two starts ago and is a player based on that evidence, while **Party Vibes** and **Titan Discovery** are others with strong form claims.

3.42 VIRGIN BET MASTERS HCAP CHASE
£26,015 (2) 3m 42yds (6) ITV1

1 3P/111-2 **MR VANGO (56) (C,F)** 10 12 0.......... **J Tudor** 157
Runs: 13 Wins: 6(S,GS) Places: 2 £243,378
Trainer: S Bradstock Owner: Cracker and Smodge Partnership

2 P0/PP-PP **NASSALAM (76) (D)** 9 11 4.......... **C Quinn** –
Runs: 25 Wins: 7(S,GS) Places: 3 £195,529
Trainer: G & J Moore Owner: John and Yvonne Stone

3 P6-U159 **PIC ROC (42) (D)** 8 10 7.......... **B R Jones** 158
Runs: 18 Wins: 2(GS,G) Places: 7 £66,135
Trainer: B Pauling Owner: Mrs Emma Kendall

4 5F/PPP-5 **BLACKJACK MAGIC (28) (D)** 11 10 3
S Twiston-Davies 152
Runs: 21 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 2 £85,346
Trainer: A Honeyball Owner: Mr A Honeyball

5 21234-1 ● **FORTUNATE MAN (36) 7 10 2..... H Cobden** ★159
Runs: 12 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 3 £53,866
Trainer: J & A O'Neill Owner: Mr John P McManus

6 51-6L33 **HUNTER LEGEND (23) 9 10 2**
Miss L M Turner(5) 156
Runs: 22 Wins: 5(S) Places: 6 £51,647
Trainer: V Williams Owner: Gaskins Family

BLINKERS: No. 2 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 4, 5 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 3, 5.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Mr Vango, 2 Fortunate Man, 9-2 Pic Roc, 10 Nassalam, 12 Hunter Legend, 14 Blackjack Magic.

2025: O'Connell 9-10-11, G Sheehan 7-4 Fav (J Parkinson & S Smith), 9 ran.

GUIDE: MR VANGO's winning run may have come to an end in the Becher Chase at Aintree (3m2f, sft) last time, but that was still an effort full of promise and he could be hard to beat in this company, despite a 3lb rise. **Fortunate Man** could prove to be the main threat following his Aintree (3m1f, gd-sft) success on Boxing Day. The rest have questions to answer, but **Hunter Legend** is the pick of them.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Heavy. Right Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Harry Cobden 18% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** G & J Moore 16% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.25 Norn Iron (tongue strap), Rip Wheeler (blinkers), 2.02 Jax Junior (wind surgery), 3.10 Sole Solution (cheek pieces), 3.42 Nassalam (wind surgery), 12.20 Ionian (hood), Crackerjacque (tongue strap), 12.55 Zainy Champ (tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 12.20 The Cistercian. 1.25 El Granjero(hcp ch), Norn Iron(hcp ch), Rip Wheeler(hcp ch). 2.02 Hypotenus(hcp ch). 3.42 Mr Vango(hcp ch), Pic Roc(hcp ch). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Kala Conti** (2.40) & **Kitzbuhel** (2.40) Ireland; **Haddex Des Obeaux** (2.02) 178 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 12.20 **Wispit Twob** from D Hogan in Ireland to M Keighley.

1.15 NOVICE HURDLE (GRADE 1)
€90,000 (Class 1) 2m 6f 53yds (9 declared)

1 3/2-1511 ● **DOCTOR STEINBERG (56)** W P Mullins 6 11-10... **P Townend** 138
2 122315 **FRANKIE JOHN (22) (C)** D Hogan 6 11-10.......... **D G Hogan** 130
3 1113/22 **JALON D'OUDAIRIES (33)** G Elliott 7 11-10..... **J C Gainford** 130
4 521-B11 **KAZANSKY (36)** G Elliott 6 11-10.......... **J W Kennedy** 133
5 1113 **LOVE ME TENDER (35)** W P Mullins 5 11-10.......... **M P Walsh** ★139
6 22-4212 **RISKAWAY (35)** G Elliott 6 11-10.......... **D Gilligan** 137
7 1-411 **SANTO SOSPIR (23)** G Elliott 5 11-10.......... **S Bowen** 133
8 2F1611 **TACKLETOMMYWOOWOO (90)** D Queally 6 11-10... **S O'Keeffe** 133
9 28-13 **YESHIL (36)** H De Bromhead 6 11-10.......... **J J Slevin** 129

SP FORECAST: Evens Doctor Steinberg, 5 Kazansky, 6 Santo Sospir, 8 Love Me Tender, Tackletommywoowoo, 16 Jalon D'oudairies, 20 Riskaway, 33 Others.

1.50 JUVENILE HURDLE (GRADE 1) 4YO
€90,000 (1) 2m (7)

1 14 **BARBIZON (36) (D)** G Elliott 11-0.......... **D Gilligan** 139
2 32-1 **BERTUTEA (36) (D)** W P Mullins 11-0.......... **S O'Keeffe** 130
3 1 **IMMEDIATE EFFECT (31) (D)** G Elliott 11-0.......... **S Bowen** 127
4 1-21 ● **NARCISO HAS (36) (C&D)** W P Mullins 11-0... **M P Walsh** ★154
5 3 **NORTH SHORE (36)** G Cromwell 11-0.......... **S W Flanagan** 143
6 111 **MANGE TOUT (62) (D)** G Elliott 10-7.......... **J W Kennedy** 150
7 2-51 **SELMA DE VARY (87)** W P Mullins 10-7.......... **P Townend** –

SP FORECAST: 8-11 Narciso Has, 3 Mange Tout, 8 Selma De Vary, 12 Bertutea, 16 Immediate Effect, 20 Barbizon, 25 North Shore.

2.25 HANDICAP HURDLE (0-150) (LISTED)
€60,000 (1) 3m 19yds (24)

1 99-3112 **STAFFORDSHIRE KNOT (9) (D)** G Elliott 8 11-12... **C Millar(5)** 150
2 01328-0 **D ART D ART (273)** T Cooper 7 10-10.......... **D King** 149
3 P/331P-0 **DAILY PRESENT (34)** P Nolan 9 10-10.......... **E Staples(5)** 125
4 3C25P0 **YEATS STAR (35)** G Elliott 7 10-10.......... **J C Gainford** 144
5 141-012 **GRANN'S BOY (98)** H Rogers 6 10-9.......... **D J O'Keeffe** 151
6 23F0-97 **MINELLA SIXO (17)** G Elliott 7 10-9.......... **K Sexton** 119
7 74-2413 **SON OF ANARCHY (14)** G Elliott 7 10-9.......... **J W Kennedy** 150
8 653-745 **WENDROCK (33) (C)** G Elliott 5 10-9... **Josh Williamson(5)** 144
9 27-6311 **CHAMPAGNE KID (33) (C)** P E Collins 7 10-8... **E Finegan(7)** 149
10 3033PP **TIMMY TUESDAY (56)** G Elliott 8 10-8.......... **P Cleary(7)** 134
11 85122 ● **COUNTY FINAL (36)** E McNamara 6 10-7....... **M P Walsh** 150
12 724101 **DUKE SILVER (34) (C,D)** J P O'Brien 6 10-6.. **H Horgan(5)** 147
13 43-7ULL **I LOVE MY BAIE (56)** S Crawford 8 10-6.......... **J J Slevin** 148
14 4-1L240 **SYSKO (34)** W P Mullins 6 10-6.......... **D Mullins** 149
15 6-02140 **ECLIPSE CHASER (34)** W P Mullins 6 10-4.......... **S O'Keeffe** 145
16 38-3323 **HE CAN'T DANCE (14)** G Elliott 6 10-4.......... **D Gilligan** 150
17 1F-3533 **ROAD TO HOME (45)** W P Mullins 7 10-3.......... **B Hayes** 139
18 313134 **BARRA RUA (36)** E Mullins 6 10-0.......... **S Bowen** 149
19 00-22L9 **LITTLEFOOT (35)** M Molloy 8 10-0.......... **P M O'Brien(5)** ★152
20 13-8452 **DIPPEDINMOONLIGHT (17)** E Mullins 6 10-0... **M Kenneally(7)** 149
21 F22-0P0 **HARTUR D'ARC (35)** J McConnell 9 10-0.......... **S D Torrens** 85
22 5L8453 **SAINT LE FORT (33)** P Fenton 6 10-0.......... **Niall Moore(5)** 148
23 8P-0557 **SAVANTE (34)** Colm Murphy 7 10-0.......... **C M Hogan(7)** 147
24 111413 **SMALL TOWN HERO (34) (D)** Ian Donoghue 6 10-0
C Stone-Walsh 142

SP FORECAST: 5 County Final, 13-2 Champagne Kid, 7 Dippedinmoonlight, 8 Duke Silver, Son Of Anarchy, 12 Saint Le Fort, Wendrock, Road To Home, 16 Others.

BEST OF LEOPARDSTOWN RTV

2.55 NOVICE CHASE (GRADE 1)
€90,000 (1) 2m 1f (3) ITV1

1 7-P0121 **DOWNMEXICOWAY (84) (D)** 7 11 12.. **D J O'Keeffe** 146
Runs: 11 Wins: 4(S) Places: 3 €36,974
Trainer: H De Bromhead Owner: Basil Holian

2 132-111 ● **ROMEO COOLIO (36) (C&D)** 7 11 12... **J W Kennedy** ★163
Runs: 12 Wins: 7(S) Places: 4 €231,529
Trainer: G Elliott Owner: KTDA Racing

3 121-321 **KARGESE (35) (C&D)** 6 11 5.......... **P Townend** 153
Runs: 13 Wins: 6(S,GS) Places: 6 €426,734
Trainer: W P Mullins Owner: Kenneth Alexander

SP FORECAST: 1-2 Romeo Coolio, 7-4 Kargese, 20 Downmexicoway.

GUIDE: After the absence of Kopek Des Bordes, this appears to be a fine opportunity for **ROMEO COOLIO** to maintain his unbeaten record over fences. He has looked a natural in this discipline with victories at Down Royal (2m4f, gd-yld) and in the Drinmore at Fairyhouse (2m4f, yld-sft) followed by a tough display over C&D (yld) at Christmas. Connections had wondered which race to target at this meeting, but with the deluge of rain that has hit the course recently, it makes perfect sense to go for the shorter trip. **Kargese** won a beginners' chase here (2m1f, yld) over the Festive period but needs to improve further to trouble the selection, while similar comments apply to **Downmexicoway**.

3.30 IRISH GOLD CUP (GRADE 1)
€142,500 (1) 3m 100yds (13) ITV1

1 5/2-2211 **AFFORDALE FURY (34) (C&D)** 8 11 10... **D Meyler** 171
Runs: 14 Wins: 6(S) Places: 5 €211,791
Trainer: N Meade Owner: P L Polly

2 13-12S5 **CHAMP KIELY (30)** 10 11 10.......... **J J Slevin** 165
Runs: 16 Wins: 7(S,G) Places: 2 €217,558
Trainer: W P Mullins Owner: Miss M A Masterson

3 231-L26 **FACT TO FILE (36) (C,D)** 9 11 10..... **M P Walsh** 178
Runs: 15 Wins: 7(S,GS) Places: 6 €672,513
Trainer: W P Mullins Owner: John P McManus

4 2362-12 **FIREFOX (42)** 8 11 10.......... **S Bowen** 158
Runs: 18 Wins: 6(S) Places: 6 €183,381
Trainer: G Elliott Owner: Bective Stud

5 2311-13 **GAELIC WARRIOR (36)** 8 11 10... **Mr P W Mullins** 176
Runs: 20 Wins: 10(S,GS,G) Places: 7 €715,804
Trainer: W P Mullins Owner: Mrs S Ricci

6 3112-13 ● **GALOPIN DES CHAMPS (34) (C&D)** 10 11 10
P Townend 179
Runs: 25 Wins: 15(S,GS) Places: 6 €1,980,722
Trainer: W P Mullins Owner: Mrs Audrey Turley

7 2L35-84 **GRANGECLARE WEST (34) (C&D)** 10 11 10.. **B Hayes** 168
Runs: 16 Wins: 6(S) Places: 2 €246,232
Trainer: W P Mullins Owner: Cheveley Park Stud

THE SCOUT

1.15 Doctor Steinberg
1.50 Narciso Has
2.25 County Final
2.55 Romeo Coolio
3.30 Galopin Des Champs
4.05 Western Diego
4.40 It's Only A Game

Inspection 8.00am

8 1/P82-L2 **I AM MAXIMUS (34)** 10 11 10......... **J W Kennedy** 173
Runs: 20 Wins: 6(S,GS) Places: 6 €1,120,200
Trainer: W P Mullins Owner: John P McManus

9 L541-5L **INOTHEWAYURTHINKIN (34)** 8 11 10
K M Donoghue ★181
Runs: 17 Wins: 5(S,GS) Places: 2 €526,603
Trainer: G Cromwell Owner: John P McManus

10 111-F77 **LECKY WATSON (34) (D)** 8 11 10.... **S O'Keeffe** 162
Runs: 16 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 3 €193,713
Trainer: W P Mullins Owner: Slaneyville Syndicate

11 254-305 **MONTY'S STAR (34) (D)** 9 11 10... **D J O'Keeffe** 163
Runs: 16 Wins: 2(S) Places: 7 €169,546
Trainer: H De Bromhead Owner: Barry Maloney

12 L22-338 **STELLAR STORY (34) (D)** 9 11 10...... **D Gilligan** 158
Runs: 18 Wins: 6(S) Places: 4 €227,422
Trainer: G Elliott Owner: Gigginstown House Stud

13 5111-11 **SPINDLEBERRY (33)** 8 11 3.......... **D Mullins** 167
Runs: 10 Wins: 7(S,G) Places: 2 €154,007
Trainer: W P Mullins Owner: Fearghal & Bronagh Eastwood

SP FORECAST: 6-4 Galopin Des Champs, 6 Gaelic Warrior, 13-2 Fact To File, 8 Inothewayurthinkin, Affordale Fury, Spindleberry, 12 I Am Maximus, 25 Others.

GUIDE: GALOPIN DES CHAMPS bids to become the second horse after Florida Pearl to win this contest four times. Willie Mullins' star chaser has outstanding claims to achieve the feat judged on a fine comeback when third in the Savills (3m, gd-yld) behind **Affordale Fury** following an interrupted preparation. With softer ground most certainly in his favour, the 10-year-old can further enhance his strong reputation as the best staying chaser since the Kauto Star/Denman era. **Gaelic Warrior** hasn't performed to his best here over fences but he cannot be discounted on his King George (3m, gd) third, while **Fact To File** has something to prove after underperforming in that contest. Others to consider are **Spindleberry**, **Grangeclare West** and **I Am Maximus**.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Heavy. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Paul Townend 36% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** W P Mullins 17% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.50 Selma De Vary (hood), 2.25 Minella Sixo (visor), Yeats Star (cheek pieces), 3.30 Stellar Story (blinkers, tongue strap), Firefox (tongue strap). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 1.15 Jalon D'oudairies, Riskaway. 2.25 He Can't Dance, Staffordshire Knot. 3.30 Champ Kiely, Firefox, Gaelic Warrior, Galopin Des Champs. 4.05 Ballysax Hank(hcp ch), Jasko Des Dames(hcp ch). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: D Art D Art** (2.25) Ireland; **Mossy Way** (4.40) 70 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 1.50 **Selma De Vary** from E Clayeux in France to W P Mullins. 4.40 **Charismatic Kid** from Colm Ryan in Ireland to G Elliott.

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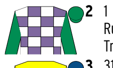
MUSSELBURGH RACINGTV

THE SCOUT

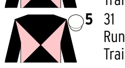
1.10 Secret Force
1.43 Star Of Guiting
2.20 MOON D'ORANGE (nap)
3.00 Absolutely Doyen
3.37 Platin Moon
4.11 Kelce

1.10 SCOTTISH TRIUMPH HDL (LISTED) 4YO
£28,475 (1) 1m 7f 124yds (6 dec) ITV1


1 211161 **LORD (56) (T)** 11 5 .... **D McMenamin 122**
Runs: 6 Wins: 4(S,GS,G) Places: 1 £41,193
Trainer: D McCain Owner: David & Carol Shaw

2 1 **FALLS OF ACHARN (30) (C&D,T)** 11 0... **F Gingell 118**
Runs: 1 Wins: 1(GS) £5,446
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Mr Alexander McGregor

3 3142 **SCARLET MOON (30) (D,T)** 11 0 .... **B Poste 125**
Runs: 4 Wins: 1(G) Places: 1 £9,426
Trainer: A Watson Owner: Arbib Bloodstock Partnership


4 14 ● **SECRET FORCE (77) (D)** 11 0 .... **B Hughes★129**
Runs: 2 Wins: 1 £11,134
Trainer: G Cromwell (IRE) Owner: Mr J Fyffe

5 31 **MADE U BLUSH (33) (T)** 10 7.............. **T Durrell 122**
Runs: 2 Wins: 1(G) £5,071
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Mr J Fyffe

6 14 **WONDERFULWONDERFUL (64)** 10 7.. **A Harvey 127**
Runs: 2 Wins: 1(G) £7,357
Trainer: J McConnell (IRE) Owner: Rockview Stables

CHEEK PIECES: No. 3 HOOD: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 5-4 Secret Force, 9-2 Lord, 6 Made U Blush, Falls Of Acharn, 13-2 Scarlet Moon, 12 Wonderfulwonderful.

2025: St Pancras 11-0, Kevin Brogan 33-1 (T Lawes), 10 ran.

GUIDE: The Gavin Cromwell yard has started to find some form and, with that in mind, a confident vote is for **SECRET FORCE**. The Frankel gelding didn't live up to market expectations when only a modest fourth in the Triumph Trial at Cheltenham (2m, hvy), but he could return to form in these calmer waters. **Lord** finished a distant sixth in that same contest but did win well at Aintree (2m1f, sft) last time. **Falls Of Acharn**, who defeated the reopposing **Scarlet Moon** (second) over C&D (gd-sft) on his hurdling bow, is also noted.

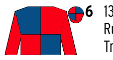
1.43 SCOTTISH COUNTY HANDICAP HDL
£20,812 (2) 1m 7f 124yds (10) ITV1

1 152-143 **KATEIRA (49) (D,T)** 9 12 0.................... **T Durrell 143**
Runs: 17 Wins: 7(S,GS,G) Places: 3 £160,173
Trainer: D Skelton Owner: Mr Stephen Bough & Dan Skelton

2 LL3211 **WILLIETHEBUILDER (21) (D,T)** 7 11 7
T McCain-Mitchell(5) 145
Runs: 20 Wins: 4(GS,G) Places: 5 £63,389
Trainer: Christian Williams Owner: Mrs Susan Carsberg

3 1PL-105 **GIBBS ISLAND (55) (D,T)** 5 11 5.... **S Sheppard 146**
Runs: 7 Wins: 3(S,GS,G) £31,796
Trainer: T Lacey Owner: Raceshare - Gibbs Island

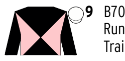
4 715-046 **WELSH CHARGER (42) (C&D,T)** 8 10 10
C Gethings★149
Runs: 17 Wins: 6(S,GS,G) Places: 3 £58,430
Trainer: A Ralph Owner: Jones, Spiers & Hartwell


5 12/112-6 **WISE EAGLE (F15) (C&D)** 9 10 8... **J Thompson(5) 147**
Runs: 7 Wins: 3(A,GS,G) Places: 3 £19,495
Trainer: A Nicol Owner: The Seahouses Syndicate

6 131110 **SALIGO BAY (15) (D,T)** 8 10 7........... **J England 147**
Runs: 31 Wins: 8(S,GS,G) Places: 10 £91,627
Trainer: S England Owner: Lpd Demolition Ltd

7 30P-734 **AFADIL (30) (C&D,T)** 7 10 2........ **F Keighley(7) 145**
Runs: 26 Wins: 4(S,GS,G) Places: 5 £113,653
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Mr P J Vogt

8 351216 **CITY OF DIAMONDS (30) (C&D,F,T)** 6 10 2
B Hughes 145
Runs: 8 Wins: 2(F,GS) Places: 2 £12,554
Trainer: D McCain Owner: Mr J Fyffe


9 B70-F33 **STATIC (55) (T)** 5 10 2.................... **C Maggs(5) 148**
Runs: 15 Wins: 2(S) Places: 5 £60,739
Trainer: D McCain Owner: Mr J Fyffe

10 14-3U21 ● **STAR OF GUITING (30) (C&D)** 5 10 2
Sean Quinlan 141
Runs: 11 Wins: 3(GS,G) Places: 3 £30,449
Trainer: Ewan Whillans Owner: Racing On Together Club

HOOD: No. 9.

SP FORECAST: 3 Williethebuilder, 7-2 Afadil, 9-2 Welsh Charger, 10 Star Of Guiting, Wise Eagle, Kateira, 12 Static, Gibbs Island, 14 Others.

2025: Welsh Charger 7-11-5, David Noonan 14-1 (A Ralph), 12 ran.

GUIDE: Williethebuilder has to be respected following back-to-back wins in recent weeks, but his new mark demands more from him. With that in mind, preference is for **WELSH CHARGER**, who won this contest 12 months ago (gd-sft) off just 1lb lower and he was not disgraced in the Greatwood (2m, sft) two starts ago. **Afadil** was second to the selection last season and is an obvious threat once again, while **Kateira** and **Star Of Guiting** are others to consider.

2.20 SCOTTISH CHAMPION CHASE (HCAP)
£41,624 (2) 2m 4f 68yds (8) ITV1

1 405-332 **JPR ONE (49) (T)** 9 12 0.................... **B J Powell 159**
Runs: 20 Wins: 6(S,GS,G) Places: 3 £209,303
Trainer: J Tizzard Owner: Mr J P Romans

2 3L188-3 **INSURRECTION (30) (C&D,T)** 9 10 11
F Keighley(7) 159
Runs: 15 Wins: 4(S,GS) Places: 4 £68,726
T: P Nicholls O: Noel Fehily Racing Syndicate - Insurre

3 33-3554 **TOMMY'S OSCAR (30)** 11 10 11..... **Sean Quinlan★162**
Runs: 45 Wins: 13(S,GS,G) Places: 10 £296,179
Trainer: A Hamilton Owner: Mr Ian Hamilton

4 2118-L5 **THE KALOOKI KID (30) (C&D,F)** 8 10 10
D McMenamin 158
Runs: 15 Wins: 4(S,GS,G) Places: 4 £91,820
Trainer: N Richards Owner: Eddie Melville & Kenny Haughey

5 1127-17 **TEDDY BLUE (70)** 8 10 6................ **Paul O'Brien 156**
Runs: 26 Wins: 5(GS,G) Places: 6 £182,873
Trainer: Harry Derham Owner: Hale Sargent Evans Clifton

6 7P-2421 **TRAPRAIN LAW (35)** 8 10 6 .... **P W Wadge 160**
Runs: 26 Wins: 6(S,G) Places: 10 £142,010
T: L Russell & M Scudamore O: Mr Raymond Anderson Green

7 7L0056 ● **MOON D'ORANGE (7)** 8 10 2.... **A Harvey(3) 151**
Runs: 24 Wins: 3(S,GS,G) Places: 4 £99,047
T: J McConnell (IRE) O: Ian Stuart Griffiths and Gary Evans

8 2P1-L57 **BLEU D'ENFER (30) (D,T)** 8 10 2 .. **C Maggs(5) 153**
Runs: 26 Wins: 2(S,G) Places: 8 £40,415
Trainer: D McCain Owner: Mr J Fyffe

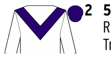
BLINKERS: Nos. 5, 7 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 3, 8.

SP FORECAST: 3 Insurrection, 4 JPR One, 5 The Kalooki Kid, Teddy Blue, 6 Traprain Law, Tommy's Oscar, 14 Moon D'orange, 25 Bleu D'enfer.

2025: The Kalooki Kid 7-10-9, D McMenamin 2-1 Fav (N Richards), 12 ran.

GUIDE: INSURRECTION is entitled to improve for his seasonal return, when third over C&D (gd-sft) earlier in the month, and Paul Nicholls' gelding appears to be the safest pick in an open event. **Traprain Law** returned to winning ways at Wetherby (2m, sft) last month and a 4lb rise for that should be workable. The consistent **JPR One** edges out **Tommy's Oscar** and **The Kalooki Kid** to be the pick of the remainder.

3.00 SCOTTISH STAYERS' NOVICES' HURDLE
£13,202 (2) 2m 7f 180yds (5)


1 42-1111 ● **ABSOLUTELY DOYEN (36) (D,T)** 6 11 8... **F Gingell★135**
Runs: 12 Wins: 4(GS,G) Places: 4 £34,686
Trainer: P Nicholls Owner: Ian Moore

2 556221 **LEWISHAM GROVE (16) (T)** 5 11 5.. **Sean Quinlan 122**
Runs: 8 Wins: 1(GS) Places: 2 £9,249
Trainer: J Candlish Owner: Split The G Partnership

3 16-17 **OUT OF THE WOODS (63)** 6 11 5..... **P W Wadge 120**
Runs: 4 Wins: 2(S,GS) £7,527
T: L Russell & M Scudamore O: Mark Blandford & The Montassib Partner

4 324115 **WALKS THE TALK (42)** 7 11 1.............. **A Harvey 128**
Runs: 7 Wins: 3(GS) Places: 2 £13,497
Trainer: J McConnell (IRE) Owner: Keep Er Lit Syndicate

5 632-222 **SLEEDAGH (29)** 6 11 0............................. **D R Fox 127**
Runs: 6 Places: 5 £7,989
Trainer: L Russell & M Scudamore Owner: Burnside Racing Ltd

HOOD: No. 4.

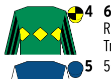
SP FORECAST: 10-11 Absolutely Doyen, 4 Walks The Talk, 11-2 Sleedagh, 13-2 Lewisham Grove, 10 Out Of The Woods.

2025: Intense Approach 6-11-8, James Bowen 5-4 Fav (J McConnell), 5 ran.

3.37 BET365 HANDICAP HURDLE
£5,281 (4) 1m 7f 124yds (9)

1 14F-273 **PADDYS POLICY (33) (T)** 6 11 13... **C Maggs(5) 115**
Runs: 9 Wins: 1(GS) Places: 4 £9,466
Trainer: D McCain Owner: Mr & Mrs Wf Ainscough

2 L46UP-7 **IRISH BLAZE (42) (D)** 10 11 12 ... **D McMenamin 93**
Runs: 28 Wins: 4(S,G) Places: 5 £40,905
Trainer: N Richards Owner: Na Dochasach Partnership


3 113-21L **CHANONRY POINT (30) (C&D)** 6 11 11.. **P W Wadge 105**
Runs: 6 Wins: 3(GS) Places: 1 £11,348
Trainer: L Russell & M Scudamore Owner: Mr Gerry McGladery

4 6/53-41 **MAGNA VICTOR (40) (C&D,T)** 7 11 11... **C Gethings 114**
Runs: 5 Wins: 1(GS) Places: 1 £5,359
Trainer: A Ralph Owner: Mr S Price

5 5-91453 **RAVENSCRAIG CASTLE (30) (D)** 8 11 11
J Thompson(5) 113
Runs: 15 Wins: 1(G) Places: 6 £23,669
Trainer: I Jardine Owner: A Sinclair, I Jardine & V Renwick

6 1-43213 **CAPTAIN COOL (89) (T)** 6 11 5.... **Sean Quinlan 114**
Runs: 8 Wins: 2(F) Places: 2 £7,695
Trainer: J Candlish Owner: A Baxter, Sowray & White Hart

7 313366 **AS FAST AS WIND (10) (D)** 6 11 3 **Paul O'Brien 116**
Runs: 11 Wins: 1(G) Places: 2 £9,803
Trainer: T Davidson Owner: Mr Tony Harrison

8 52-4651 ● **PLATIN MOON (18) (D)** 5 11 2 .... **B Lynn ★118**
Runs: 7 Wins: 1(S) Places: 1 £11,122
T: N Alexander O: Turcan, McIntosh,coltman, Douglas Mill

9 126932 **GEMINI MAN (40) (D)** 8 11 2 .... **B Hughes 116**
Runs: 12 Wins: 1(G) Places: 5 £16,369
Trainer: I Jardine Owner: Mr G Gibson & Mr Jamie Denholm

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 3, 5, 6 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 5, 6, 9.

SP FORECAST: 4 Platin Moon, 5 Paddys Policy, Gemini Man, 6 Magna Victor, Chanonry Point, 8 Captain Cool, 10 Irish Blaze, Ravenscraig Castle, 12 As Fast As Wind.

2025: Bashful 7-11-2, Danny McMenamin 7-2 Fav (I Jardine), 15 ran.

4.11 HANDICAP CHASE
£10,562 (3) 2m 7f 138yds (7)

1 L19/L3P- **EMPIRE STEEL (379)** A M Thomson 12 12-0 .... **C Maggs(5) –**
2 3771-PL **INOX ALLEN (30)** L Russell & M Scudamore 8 11-6
P W Wadge 138
3 753142 **REXEM (30)** J McConnell (IRE) 9 11-1................ **D A Kidd(7) 136**
4 224-362 **SPECIAL RATE (40)** H Burns 9 11-1........................ **B Hughes 136**
5 F21-472 ● **KELCE (36) (D) (T)** N Mulholland 8 10-11..... **C O'Farrell ★141**
6 126-021 **SAMMY SMART (31)** T Gibney (IRE) 10 10-7 . **James Smith(5) 134**
7 P-1L4F3 **ALWAYS BUSY (17) (D) (T)** Christian Williams 8 10-2
Mr John Joe Murphy-Knight(7) 139

VISOR: No. 2 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 4 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 3, 5.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Rexem, 5-2 Sammy Smart, 10-3 Kelce, 8 Special Rate, 10 Empire Steel, 12 Inox Allen, 25 Always Busy.

2025: One More Stroke 6-10-9, Brian Hughes 9-4 (D McCain), 6 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Good to Soft. Right Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Brian Hughes 17% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** D McCain 19% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 3.05 Transmission (visor), Magna Sam (wind surgery), 3.40 Encanto Bruno (hood). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 1.25 Elysian Knight(hcp ch), Intense Approach. 1.55 Pure Carbon(hcp ch). 2.30 The Hatchet. 3.40 The Gray Ghost(hcp hdl). 4.15 Benefit Ben(hcp ch), Dearkeithandkaty(hcp hdl), Lizzie Luna(hcp hdl). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Intense Approach** (1.25), **The Toothpicker** (2.30), **Charlie's Dilemma** (2.30), **Bodhisattva** (3.05), **I Love My Baie** (3.40), **Encanto Bruno** (3.40), **Anyway** (3.40), **Take Chance** (4.15) Ireland; **Rock My Way** (3.05) 407 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 2.30 **Newtown Rambler** from H De Bromhead in Ireland to A Keatley. 3.40 **Encanto Bruno** from G Cromwell in Ireland to J McConnell.

THE SCOUT'S SCOOP SIX HINTS

Leg 1 STAR OF GUITING (No 10) (1:43 Musselburgh)	**Leg 4 SPIKE JONES (No 10)** (3:10 Sandown)
Leg 2 RATH GAUL HILL (No 10) (2:02 Sandown)	**Leg 5 GALOPIN DES CHAMPS (6)** (3:30 Leopardstown)
Leg 3 MOON D'ORANGE (No 7) (2:20 Musselburgh)	**Leg 6 WESTERN DIEGO (No 5)** (4:05 Leopardstown)

WETHERBY RTV (8AM INSP.)

THE SCOUT

12.30 Khutulun Khan
1.00 Galidam
1.33 Just Golden
2.08 Prince Zaltar
2.45 Baratablet
3.15 Zhiguli
3.50 Midnight Jukebox

12.30 MARES' NOVICES' HURDLE
£5,446 (Class 4) 2m (6 declared)

1 451817 **BITTALEMON (42)** J Moffatt 5 11-12................. **L Norcei(10) 108**
2 500L-61 **QUEENIE ST CLAIR (36)** Nick Scholfield 6 11-7.. **J Quinlan ★116**
3 418 **KAYDENCE (55)** O Murphy 6 11-0........................... **R T Dunne –**
4 30/5 ● **KHUTULUN KHAN (20)** L Wadham 7 11-0 .... **J J Burke 100**
5 2/ **MIDNIGHT VENTURE (707) (F)** J Snowden 6 11-0
J A Anderson(3) –
6 37-66 **REDEEMING LOVE (15)** M Walford 6 11-0........... **J Hamilton 104**

CHEEK PIECES: No. 1 HOOD: No. 2.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Kaydence, 3 Midnight Venture, 9-2 Queenie St Clair, 11-2 Redeeming Love, 6 Khutulun Khan, 8 Bittalemon.

1.00 NOVICES' HANDICAP CHASE
£3,697 (5) 2m 3f 85yds (7)

1 934L-72 **BANK ON FRANK (76)** B Pauling 8 12-0.. **Beau Morgan(5) 102**
2 15P-63L ● **GALIDAM (34)** M Hammond 6 11-12.................... **C Bewley 104**
3 34-P4P2 **COPPER COVE (23)** Dominic Elsworth 9 11-7 ..... **R T Dunne –**
4 64-L222 **ATHAIR MOR (36)** Paul Robson 7 11-6...................... **R Mania ★105**
5 0P2430 **KING OF CONG (34)** S England 8 11-6............. **T Midgley(3) 103**
6 23/5-0L8 **AHANAGLOGH (19)** F O'Brien 7 10-13 .... **J J Burke –**
7 556P-00 **WESTERDALE (35)** M Walford 7 10-3 .... **J Hamilton –**

BLINKERS: No. 5 TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 2, 4
CHEEK PIECES: No. 1.

SP FORECAST: 7-4 Athair Mor, 15-8 Bank On Frank, 5 Copper Cove, 13-2 Galidam, 16 Ahanaglogh, 25 Westerdale, King Of Cong.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Soft. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Harry Skelton 33% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** D Skelton 28% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.00 Bank On Frank (cheek pieces), King Of Cong (blinkers), 1.33 Just Golden (tongue strap), 2.08 Big City Roller (cheek pieces), 3.15 Major Dundee (blinkers), Arthur's Seat (wind surgery), Paul Marvel (cheek pieces), 3.50 Prince Phil (hood). **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Kalium** (2.45) 242 miles.

1.33 WILMOT-SMITH MEMORIAL MAIDEN HURDLE
£5,446 (4) 2m 3f 154yds (6)

1 62 **FOREVER LOUIE (40) (F)** R Menzies 5 11-4...... **R Chapman –**
2 21-232 ● **JUST GOLDEN (30)** D Skelton 6 11-4 .... **H Skelton ★130**
3 54-3 **NOSY NEIGHBOUR (67)** R Menzies 5 11-4........... **N Moscrop 97**
4 1-33 **SOLID PERFORMER (29)** D McCain 8 11-4 .... **W Maggs(5) 119**
5 1 **THE DOG THIEF (49)** T Ellis 6 11-4......................... **J Andrews –**
6 F324-RL **CALLMESUSIE (13)** L Allan 8 10-11.......................... **J Quinlan 37**

TONGUE STRAP: No. 2.

SP FORECAST: 2-5 Just Golden, 6 Solid Performer, 7 Forever Louie, 10 The Dog Thief, 16 Nosy Neighbour, 200 Callmesusie.

2.08 HANDICAP CHASE
£7,804 (3) 2m 3f 85yds (6)

1 223011/ **TWOSHOTSOFTEQUILA (697)** R Menzies 9 12-2... **N Moscrop –**
2 4112/1-5 **BIG CITY ROLLER (22)** C Longsdon 8 11-11 .... **Lilly Pinchin ★130**
3 34-24F6 **CERENDIPITY (14) (C)** J Parkinson & S Smith 9 11-9
J Hamilton 129
4 416234 ● **PRINCE ZALTAR (35)** D Skelton 9 11-8............ **H Skelton 128**
5 335-F7L **JASMIN DE COTTE (14)** D Skelton 7 11-0.............. **C J Todd 118**
6 P54-251 **TRAC (51) (C&D)** M Hammond 9 10-9 .... **C Bewley 124**

BLINKERS: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: No. 2.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 Prince Zaltar, 11-4 Trac, 7-2 Twoshotsoftequila, 6 Big City Roller, Cerendipity, 20 Jasmin De Cotte.

2.45 HANDICAP HURDLE
£7,922 (3) 2m 3f 154yds (8)

1 P41-435 **JUNKER D'ALLIER (29)** O Murphy 7 12-0 .. **L Saunders(5) 125**
2 21151-3 **KALIUM (63) (C) (T)** T Vaughan 6 11-12............. **J M Davies 123**
3 20-4121 **JOHN BARBOUR (31) (D)** F O'Brien 7 11-11............ **J J Burke 126**
4 2131-14 ● **BARATABLET (33) (D)** N Richards 6 11-7 .... **C Bewley 127**
5 21F-331 **KINGSTON NARCISSUS (36) (D)** R Menzies 7 11-4
R Chapman 125
6 111P-0L **LORD OF ALL SAINTS (51) (D) (T)** H Dickin 6 10-12 ... **J Best 112**
7 7430-05 **JERICOACOARA (77)** M Hammond 7 10-11...... **C Rabbitt(3) ★131**
8 847-844 **NORTH PARADE (42) (D)** J Parkinson & S Smith 11 10-6
P J Kavanagh 126

TONGUE STRAP: Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6 HOOD: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 2 John Barbour, 9-2 Junker D'allier, 5 Kingston Narcissus, Kalium, 7 Baratablet, 10 North Parade, 14 Jericoacoara, 20 Lord Of All Saints.

3.15 OPEN HUNTERS' CHASE
£2,566 (5) 3m 45yds (12)

1 415-PF3 **SAM MAGEE (178)** Charles R Clark 9 12-6.. **Mr Joe Wright(3) 110**
2 11220-5 **WHAT A GLANCE (48)** T Britten 11 12-6
Mr F Philipson-Stow(7) 82
3 2832-32 **CONQUREDALOFEUROPE (63)** F Foster 11 12-2.. **Mr F Foster(7) –**
4 1-233L2 **JEFFERY'S CROSS (59) (D)** D Skelton 10 12-2
Mr Sean O'Connor(5) 124
5 2F111P **ST CUTHBERT'S CAVE (16)** J J O'Shea 8 12-2... **Mr H Crow(5) 126**
6 5P473-5 **ARTHUR'S SEAT (271)** W J Brown 9 11-12.. **Miss P Brown(5) –**
7 3323P3- **GOOD BOY BOBBY (336) (C&D)** N & W Twiston-Davies 13 11-12
Miss A Jackson-Fennell(7) ★130
8 PU/6P6-2 **MAJOR DUNDEE (49) (D)** Francesca Poste 11 11-12
Mr S Lee(7) 107
9 P-421P2 **PAUL MARVEL (8)** J J O'Shea 9 11-12 . **Miss Lisa Oconnor(7) 120**
10 15F/24-7 **RATH AN IUIR (49) (D)** Mrs E Austin 13 11-12
Mr N Orpwood(3) –
11 313P1-5 ● **ZHIGULI (271) (D)** Mrs C Coward 11 11-12.. **Mr T Easterby(5) –**
12 12222U- **RED OPIUM (300)** Mrs C Coward 10 11-5.. **Mr John Dawson –**

BLINKERS: Nos. 3, 8 VISOR: No. 10 TONGUE STRAP: No. 2
CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 6, 7, 9, 12.

SP FORECAST: 9-4 What A Glance, 4 Good Boy Bobby, 5 Jeffery's Cross, 6 St Cuthbert's Cave, 8 Paul Marvel, 10 Major Dundee, 12 Zhiguli, 16 Others.

3.50 OPEN MAIDEN NH FLAT RACE
£2,640 (5) 2m (12)

1 5/3-5 **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER (40)** J Bedi 6 11-8........... **C Bewley 57**
2 46 **HURLYBURLY (35) (F)** J O'Keeffe 5 11-8............ **J Andrews 96**
3 0 **MARBLE SKY (35)** A Crook 5 11-8.............. **J Williamson(3) 65**
4 1- ● **MIDNIGHT JUKEBOX (328)** F O'Brien 5 11-8.. **J J Burke –**
5 2-8 **NOT WITHOUT DANGER (98)** S Drinkwater 5 11-8... **R T Dunne 102**
6 6 **PRESENTANDCORRECT (78)** R Menzies 6 11-8.. **N Moscrop 95**
7 3 **PRESLEY (56)** D Skelton 5 11-8.............................. **H Skelton ★107**
8 **PRINCE PHIL** S England 5 11-8........................... **T Midgley(3) –**
9 **SILVER CIRRUS** Paul Robson 5 11-8......................... **R Mania –**
10 34 **STATIC CHARM (35)** M Hammond 5 11-8........ **C Rabbitt(3) 100**
11 2-8312 **PORT AND BRANDY (76) (T)** M Bowen 6 11-1 **S Fenelon(5) –**
12 **MAC GAYVEUR** T H Weston 4 10-9................ **L Saunders(5) –**

TONGUE STRAP: No. 1 HOOD: Nos. 1, 8.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Presley, 9-4 Midnight Jukebox, 8 Static Charm, 10 Not Without Danger, Presentandcorrect, 12 Hurlyburly, 20 Others.

BEATEN FAVOURITES: 1.00 Athair Mor(hcp ch), Copper Cove(hcp hdl). 1.33 Just Golden. 2.45 Baratablet(hcp hdl), Junker D'allier(hcp ch). 3.15 Major Dundee, St Cuthbert's Cave. 3.50 Presley. **STABLE SWITCH:** 1.33 **The Dog Thief** from Mrs G Andrews to T Ellis. 3.15 **Arthur's Seat** from William Brown to W J Brown, **Conquredalofeurope** from Felix Foster to F Foster, **Sam Magee** from H De Bromhead in Ireland to Charles R Clark. 3.50 **Midnight Jukebox** from S Doyle in Ireland to F O'Brien, **Port And Brandy** from Harley Dunne in Ireland to M Bowen.

EVENING RESULTS

WOLVERHAMPTON: Standard

5.00—MELEK ALREEH (L Morris, 15-2) 1; Damascus Steel (16-1) 2; Jodhpur Blue (7-1) 3. H'cap 10 ran. 1½l, 1¾l. (D M Simcock; 2-1 fav Cardinal Point). Tote: £8.60; pl £2.20, £4.00, £1.70. exacta: £71.60. tricast: £883.06. trifecta: £450.20. CSF: £121.56.

5.30—CAPTAIN PICKLES (Z Wheatley, 3-1 fav) 1; Dash Power (4-1 jt 2nd fav) 2; Lady Delila (13-2) 3. 10 ran. nk, 1¼l. (T Culhane & S Barclay). Tote: £4.00; pl £1.40, £1.90, £2.80. exacta: £11.40. trifecta: £74.60. CSF: £15.16.

6.00—FIRST ENCOUNTER (L Morris, 9-2) 1; Bossy Parker (3-1 2nd fav) 2; Lhebayeb (9-2) 3. 10 ran. nk, 2½l. (J Gallagher; 11-4 fav Arlecchino's Rex). Tote: £5.50; pl £1.40, £1.80, £1.80. exacta: £21.50. trifecta: £75.40. CSF: £18.24.

6.30—TERRANOBLE (T Heard, 9-2) 1; Hot To Hot (5-6 fav) 2; Tommo's Ginjaninja (2-1 2nd fav) 3. 7 ran. 2¼l, hd. (D Coakley). Tote: £5.50; pl £1.90, £1.10. exacta: £11.40. trifecta: £21.50. CSF: £8.88.

7.00—CROCKHAM HEATH (C Hutchinson, 5-2 2nd fav) 1; Toastmaster (2-1 fav) 2; Florida Suite (18-1) 3. H'cap 7 ran. 3¼l, 6½l. (A Balding). Tote: £3.50; pl £1.70, £1.80. exacta: £11.10. trifecta: £98.30. CSF: £8.01.

7.30—HITCHED (L Morris, 7-1) 1; Farasi Lane (7-1) 2; Special Ghaiyyath (9-2 co fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. ¾l, hd. (D M Simcock; 9-2 cofav Borgi, 9-2 cofav City Of God). Tote: £8.00; pl £1.90, £2.00, £1.60. exacta: £38.40. tricast: £249.45. trifecta: £315.20. CSF: £56.50. Non-runner: Epictetus.

8.00—THREE NON BLONDES (P-L Jamin, 5-1) 1; Marseillan (9-2) 2; Balthamos (4-1 jt 2nd fav) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 3¼l, nk. (K R Burke; 3-1 fav Because We Can). Tote: £6.00; pl £1.70, £1.50, £1.70. exacta: £30.50. tricast: £100.50. trifecta: £110.20. CSF: £28.45.

8.30—PAPA COCKTAIL (J Mitchell, 5-2 fav) 1; Water Of Leith (7-1) 2; Ziggy's Queen (9-1) 3. H'cap 9 ran. 1½l, ½l. (M Herrington). tricast: £138.84. CSF: £21.21.

Placepot: £56.20
Quadpot: £8.60

VITAL STATISTICS

IN-FORM TRAINERS (last 10 days) H Daly 71% (1 wins and 4 places from 7 runners), J Snowden 67% (2/4/9), J Tizzard 67% (3/1/6), T Lacey 67% (1/3/6), K Ryan 60% (2/1/5), A Honeyball 57% (3/1/7), C Boultbee-Brooks 57% (1/3/7), K R Burke 56% (1/4/9), N Richards 56% (2/3/9), D & C Kubler 55% (2/4/11), Harry Derham 55% (2/4/11), P Nicholls 55% (3/3/11), W P Mullins 54% (8/7/28), A M Thomson 50% (1/1/4). **IN-FORM JOCKEYS** Benjamin Macey 83% (2 wins and 3 places from 6 runners), Caoilin Quinn 75% (2/1/4), Harry Atkins 75% (1/2/4), Mr Nick Orpwood 67% (2/2/6), James Bowen 65% (2/11/20), Ben Sutton 60% (2/1/5), Dylan Hogan 60% (4/5/15), Ethan Tindall 60% (2/1/5), Oisin McSweeney 60% (2/4/10), Brendan Powell 57% (3/5/14), Isabel Williams 57% (2/2/7), Callum Rodriguez 56% (2/3/9).

★ **DAY ONE of the Dublin Racing Festival must pass an 8am inspection today after heavy rain was forecast for Leopardstown last night.**

The Foxrock course passed a 2.30pm check yesterday after the hurdles track was reconfigured.

But a further 10-20mm of rain was predicted overnight and Leopardstown clerk of the course Paddy Graffin said: "The rain is to move in tonight and because of that we propose an 8am inspection, when we hope to have a bit of luck."

Should Saturday's card fall to the weather, it will take place on Monday.

Sandown's programme is also in jeopardy with a precautionary 7.30am inspection.

LINGFIELD SKYSPORTSRACING

THE SCOUT

12.35 Party Bear
1.05 Survie
1.38 Al Baahy
2.15 Dubai Harbour
2.50 Completely Random
3.20 Knight Templar
3.55 The Thames Boatman
4.30 Pitney

12.35 BETMGM SUPPORTS SAFER GAMBLING HANDICAP
£4,397 (Class 5) 7f 1yds (10 declared)

1 (4) 5164/LL- **OBSIDIAN DREAM (36)** J S Moore 4 9-9...................... **Ashley Lewis(5) 55**
2 (7) 625935- **REY DE LA BATALLA (31) (C&D)** S Dow 5 9-8...................... **P Bradley 84**
3 (8) 8L317-L **KIT GABRIEL (20) (D)** S Pearce 7 9-6 .... **T Heard 83**
4 (1) 2331-64 **ME TARZAN (17) (C&D)** A Watson 4 9-5..................... **Harry Vigors(7) ★85**
5 (3) 7671L7- **DREAM OF MISCHIEF (40) (C&D)** A Perrett 6 9-5................ **R Hornby 82**
6 (5) 0009-78 **ELOUISE'S PRINCE (10)** L Dace 4 9-4..................... **Jude Fernandes(7) 73**
7 (9) L6758-8 **ICONIC TIMES (10)** H Main 4 9-4.. **Doubtful**
8 (10) 5008-62 ● **PARTY BEAR (12) (D) (T)** K R Burke 4 9-4........................ **P-L Jamin 83**
9 (6) L8L-7L1 **MANHATTAN CHUTE (10) (C)** J & S Best 4 8-9 .... **L Morris 83**
10 (2) 1LL7-L7 **COMEDIAN LEADER (7) (D)** J & S Best 6 8-7 .... **W Cox 71**

BLINKERS: No. 4 CHEEK PIECES: No. 8 HOOD: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 11-4 Party Bear, 4 Rey De La Batalla, 5 Manhattan Chute, 11-2 Me Tarzan, 7 Dream Of Mischief, 12 Kit Gabriel, 14 Obsidian Dream, 33 Others.

2025: Rey De La Batalla 4-9-2, Paddy Bradley 11-2 (S Dow), drawn (6), 7 ran.

1.05 MIDNITE WINTER DERBY TRIAL CONDITIONS STAKES (GBBPLUS RACE) £15,462 (2) 1m 2f (3)

1 (3) L4L6L-7 **MILITARY ACADEMY (15) (D)** J Chapple-Hyam 5 9-4.............. **H Doyle 108**
2 (1) 04973-5 **TEUMESSIAS FOX (15) (D)** A Balding 7 9-4...................... **P J McDonald 110**
3 (2) 7/2324L- ● **SURVIE (119) (F)** G Boughey 5 8-13................................ **R L Moore ★122**

VISOR: No. 1 TONGUE STRAP: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 1-3 Survie, 5 Military Academy, 11-2 Teumessias Fox.

2025: No corresponding race.

1.38 MIDNITE ARE UPPING THE BETTING GAME CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 1) £3,454 (6) 1m 2f (8)

1 (7) 5745-31 ● **AL BAAHY (12)** K Frost 7 9-11.. **Rossa Ryan 58**
2 (3) 25659-4 **CAPALLCLISTE (19)** S Hodgson 6 9-9........................ **Taryn Langley(5) 51**
3 (6) 737/4-L4 **COME TO PASS (20) (C&D)** A Carroll 7 9-9...................... **Jason Watson 51**
4 (8) /5268-2 **HIJO DE LA LUNA (25) (F) (T)** S G West 6 9-9.......................... **L Morris 57**
5 (4) L1L88-2 **IFTIKHAAR (10)** J R Jenkins 7 9-9 .... **J Peate 57**
6 (2) 08-2858 **LAWMANS BLIS (5)** S A Harris 8 9-9.. **A Rawlinson 55**
7 (5) 6334-51 **MONKS MEAD (10) (C&D)** M Usher 5 9-9.. **G Bass ★59**
8 (1) LLOL-84 **RACING COUNTRY (12)** D Wingrove 11 9-9.. **T Heard 53**

VISOR: No. 5 CHEEK PIECES: No. 8 HOOD: No. 2.

SP FORECAST: 15-8 Al Baahy, 7-2 Monks Mead, 4 Iftikhaar, 5 Hijo De La Luna, 12 Come To Pass, 16 Capallcliste, Racing Country, 25 Lawmans Blis.

2025: No corresponding race.

2.15 MIDNITE ARE UPPING THE BETTING GAME CLASSIFIED STAKES (DIV 2) £3,454 (6) 1m 2f (8)

1 (2) 4064-12 **HAVEAGOBEAU (10) (C&D)** J Boyle 7 9-10 .... **J Dace(5) 58**
2 (8) 746378/ **ASENSE (487)** P Butler 7 9-9................................. **Jude Fernandes(7) –**
3 (3) 3672-53 ● **DUBAI HARBOUR (17) (C&D)** P Phelan 6 9-9 .... **P Bradley ★61**
4 (1) 7597-74 **KAARESS (10) (D)** M Attwater 5 9-9.. **W Carson 59**
5 (7) 05078-6 **LAURENTIA (10) (C&D)** Stephanie Cassidy 10 9-9........ **R Kavanagh(5) 50**
6 (6) LLLOL-4 **MARION'S BOY (10) (C&D)** D Wingrove 9 9-9........................... **T Heard 52**
7 (5) 7L847-1 **MYNA (10) (C&D)** A Carroll 5 9-9 .... **Jason Watson 56**
8 (4) 00908-5 **NEWFIRE (19)** K Frost 5 9-9.. **Rossa Ryan 50**

BLINKERS: No. 5 VISOR: Nos. 4, 6 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6.

SP FORECAST: 13-8 Haveagobeau, 7-2 Dubai Harbour, 4 Myna, 5 Kaaress, 14 Marion's Boy, 16 Laurentia, 25 Asense, 33 Newfire.

2025: No corresponding race.

2.50 MIDNITE KACHY STAKES (LISTED)
£34,026 (1) 6f 1yds (8)

1 (1) 6212-12 **ACCRUAL (21) (C&D)** D Loughnane 5 9-2.................................. **H Doyle 102**
2 (7) 58074-1 ● **COMPLETELY RANDOM (14) (C&D)** Harry Charlton 5 9-2.. **R L Moore 115**
3 (2) 1431/ **COOL HOOF LUKE (526) (D,F)** A Balding 4 9-2 .... **Jason Watson –**
4 (4) 535150- **DILIGENT HARRY (147) (C&D)** C Cox 8 9-2 .... **Rossa Ryan 121**
5 (3) 11393L- **FERROUS (134) (C&D)** J Channon 6 9-2............................ **C Rodriguez 114**
6 (5) 123367- **MARSHMAN (64) (C&D,F) (T)** K R Burke 6 9-2 .... **S James ★122**
7 (8) 212/912- **STRATUSNINE (36) (D) (T)** H Palmer 4 9-2 .... **C Shepherd 108**
8 (6) 0L1/322- **GOLDEN SICKLE (308) (F)** G Boughey 5 8-11........................ **P Cosgrave 115**

CHEEK PIECES: No. 4 EYE COVERS: No. 1 HOOD: No. 8.

SP FORECAST: 5-2 Marshman, 4 Completely Random, Ferrous, 9-2 Diligent Harry, 6 Cool Hoof Luke, 10 Golden Sickle, 25 Stratusnine, 33 Accrual.

2025: Marshman 5-9-2, Clifford Lee 4-1 (K R Burke), drawn (1), 5 ran.

3.20 MIDNITE AIN'T YOUR GRANDAD'S BOOKIE HANDICAP (GBBPLUS RACE)£5,653 (4) 1m 7f 169yds (9)

1 (5) 12/181-0 **BERKSHIRE SUNDANCE (15) (D,F)** A Balding 6 10-2 ..... **P J McDonald 86**
2 (4) 333/442- **THERAPIST (J65)** N Henderson 6 9-7.. **R Hornby 87**
3 (8) 647L-36 **VICE PRESIDENT (16)** R Hughes 5 9-7.. **F Marsh 88**
4 (9) 44444-1 **BARENBOIM (24) (C,D)** T Dascombe 8 9-7.................................. **P-L Jamin 86**
5 (6) 81113/1 ● **KNIGHT TEMPLAR (10) (D)** R Stephens 5 9-4........................ **H Crouch 87**
6 (7) 12114-4 **NAASMA (21) (C,D)** P Phelan 7 9-3.. **P Bradley 87**
7 (2) 8985-52 **EDUCATOR (10) (C)** Miss H Knight 7 9-2... **H Doyle 89**
8 (1) 5032-34 **BASHFUL BOY (10) (C&D)** D Pipe 10 9-2.. **J Dace(5) ★90**
9 (3) 75/35L8- **HAALAND (274) (C,D)** J & S Best 6 8-13.. **L Morris 84**

CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 4, 8 HOOD: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 3 Berkshire Sundance, 4 Barenboim, 9-2 Therapist, 5 Knight Templar, 7 Educator, 10 Bashful Boy, 14 Vice President, Naasma, 25 Haaland.

2025: Legendary Day 7-10-0, Kieran O'Neill 66-1 (F Brennan), drawn (4), 8 ran.

3.55 MIDNITE: BUILT FOR 2026 NOT 2006 HANDICAP
£5,653 (4) 5f 6yds (8)

1 (1) 41/L53-L **ATOMIC FORCE (18) (D,F) (T)** E Bethell 7 9-10 .... **H Crouch 95**
2 (8) 06676-1 **MICHAELA'S BOY (19) (C&D)** R Cowell 6 9-9.............................. **L Morris 92**
3 (7) 04252-1 ● **THE THAMES BOATMAN (21) (C&D)** R Hughes 6 9-7......... **F Marsh 91**
4 (4) 1435-31 **STAR CHORUS (14) (D)** M Murphy 4 9-6............................... **C Shepherd 92**
5 (5) 5893L-L **TWILIGHT JET (21) (D)** J & S Best 7 9-6.. **W Cox ★96**
6 (2) 66L8-42 **MASTER OF MY FATE (14) (C&D) (T)** J & S Quinn 5 9-5.. **M Paetel(5) 92**
7 (3) 5L515-3 **DIOMED SPIRIT (19) (C&D)** S C Williams 6 9-2.................. **Rossa Ryan 92**
8 (6) 811137 **GOGO YUBARI (14) (C&D)** A Carroll 5 8-11 .... **Harry Vigors(7) 91**

TONGUE STRAP: No. 4 HOOD: No. 3.

SP FORECAST: 3 Star Chorus, 7-2 Michaela's Boy, 4 The Thames Boatman, 6 Atomic Force, 7 Master Of My Fate, 10 Diomed Spirit, 12 Twilight Jet, 16 Gogo Yubari.

2025: Dashing Harry 4-9-3, Adam Farragher 14-1 (James Horton), drawn (2), 8 ran.

4.30 WIN 250,000 WITH BETMGM'S GOLDEN GOALS HANDICAP £3,768 (6) 1m 1yds (12)

1 (7) 3533-24 **WAY TO DUBAI (19) (D)** M Appleby 7 9-9......................... **Jason Watson 76**
2 (6) 08/724- **BALOO'S BLUES (63)** C Hills 4 9-9 .... **B Sanderson 72**
3 (10) 4732-44 ● **PITNEY (16) (D)** M Attwater 5 9-8.. **W Carson 75**
4 (9) LO/LLL-L **UNDER THE SUN (23) (D)** G & J Moore 5 9-8 .... **Jude Fernandes(7) 66**
5 (11) 33251-8 **SUZUKA (25)** A Watson 4 9-8 .... **Harry Vigors(7) 72**
6 (1) 9136-31 **NO KNEE NEVER (11) (F)** James Owen 5 9-8............. **Mason Paetel(5) 74**
7 (8) 644-5 **DODGING THE BULLET (14)** R Bandey 4 9-7................................ **K O'Neill 75**
8 (12) 1112-15 **DANDY KHAN (21) (C&D)** J Boyle 4 9-6............................... **Rossa Ryan 74**
9 (3) 98459-9 **ANTIQUITY (25) (C&D)** J Osborne 4 9-6 .... **R Hornby 75**
10 (2) 4706-15 **NAVAL ENSIGN (24) (C)** Jack Jones 4 9-5.. **H Crouch 73**
11 (5) 5167L-8 **HAVANA TOUCH (14)** J Butler 5 9-5.. **S D Bowen 66**
12 (4) 234908- **KAARANAH (49) (D)** J Butler 8 9-4 .... **L Morris ★79**

BLINKERS: No. 4 VISOR: No. 3 TONGUE STRAP: No. 6 CHEEK PIECES: Nos. 1, 6 HOOD: No. 10.

SP FORECAST: 7-2 No Knee Never, 5 Way To Dubai, 6 Dandy Khan, Baloo's Blues, Naval Ensign, 10 Pitney, Suzuka, 12 Antiquity, 20 Others.

2025: Mr Fustic 7-9-7, Dylan Hogan 11-1 (Andi Brown), drawn (5), 10 ran.

TRACK FACTS: GOING: Standard. Left Handed. **TOP TRACK JOCKEY (2021-26):** Rossa Ryan 19% Strike rate. **TOP TRACK TRAINER (2021-26):** G & J Moore 14% Strike rate. **FIRST TIME:** 1.05 Survie (tongue strap), 2.15 Laurentia (blinkers), Kaaress (visor), 2.50 Golden Sickle (hood), 4.30 Naval Ensign (hood). **BEATEN FAVOURITES:** 2.15 Asense(hcp). 2.50 Accrual(hcp), Marshman, Stratusnine(hcp). 3.20 Berkshire Sundance(hcp). 4.30 Dandy Khan(hcp), Naval Ensign(hcp). **DRAW:** Little effect. **LONGEST TRAVELLER: Party Bear** (12.35) & **Marshman** (2.50) 271 miles. **STABLE SWITCH:** 1.05 **Survie** from Clement & Hermans to G Boughey. 2.15 **Asense** from G & J Moore to P Butler. 2.50 **Golden Sickle** from Tony Peter to G Boughey.

GOSSIP FROM THE GALLOPS

Lambourn: BOLLIN THOU (12.55 Sandown)
Midlands: JUST GOLDEN (1.33 Wetherby)
Wales: WILLIETHEBUILDER (1.43 Musselburgh)
North: MARSHMAN (2.50 Lingfield)

RUGBY UNION SIX NATIONS

STEELY OLLIE IS SOLDERING ON FOR TITLE

FROM **ADAM HATHAWAY** in Girona

OLLIE CHESSUM spent lockdown working as a welder – but now he is helping put together an England team capable of ending their Six Nations drought.

The lock, who made his debut in 2022, has never won the title. You have to go back to 2020 for the last time England lifted the trophy and all the way back to 2016 for their last Grand Slam.

Chessum (above) was part of the side, under Steve Borthwick (below), who finished second last year, losing out to France by a point, despite a last day 68-14 hammering of Wales.

In 2024 England finished third, in 2023 they were fourth and in Chessum's first season as a Test player, under Eddie Jones, they were third again.

Chessum admits he has unfinished business with the tournament.

England go into this year's Six Nations on a run of 11 straight wins, with the 25-year-old saying: "There is probably a bit of a sour taste in terms of where we have finished up in the last few years.

"Last year was much improved and we came close. We had that game in Cardiff when we really wanted to put pressure on the French.

"For a while, it looked like Scotland were going to do us a favour, but it wasn't to be. In previous years we have been way off the pace. We want to right some wrongs."

In Covid-hit 2020, Chessum had signed a contract with Leicester, after impressing at Nottingham.

He had worked part-time at his mother Michelle's factory in Sleaford, and that turned into a full-time gig when rugby was stopped by the pandemic. It is a far cry from Girona, where England are training, or the Lions tour to Australia, which saw Chessum play three Tests.

Chessum added: "They build agricultural farm equipment, Bailey's Trailers, which is my mother's maiden name. I was on a pay-as-you-play kind of deal at Nottingham and for the first three-and-a-half months, I didn't play a single game.

"When Covid hit, the agricultural industry was allowed to keep producing. The family business stayed open and dropped in there and learnt to weld with my uncle and my cousin.

"I'm definitely more appreciative of my rugby because of that pathway."

MINE'S A TREBLE
Curran celebrates after bowling Pathirana to complete his hat-trick

WHAM! BAM! THANK YOU, SAM

Hat-trick hero Curran and spin king Rashid sink Sri Lanka

BY **SCOTT HUNT**

SAM CURRAN toasted a "special" night after he claimed England's second T20 hat-trick in the win over Sri Lanka.

Chris Jordan took the first England T20 hat-trick in 2024, but Curran's feat helped blow away Sri Lanka's lower-order to limit the hosts to 133 all out.

It was a brilliant recovery from the left-armer after his first two overs had been crashed for 35.

"Pretty cool to say I've got a hat-trick, but a weird night personally after getting a bit of tap in the first couple of overs," Curran said.

"Really special. At the top of my mark, Jos Buttler told me to come round the wicket. One of those where you aim for the stumps and hope he misses, and thankfully he did. The way the night started I would have taken any wicket or dot ball. Loads of excitement as you let go and see the stumps light up. It makes the night that bit sweeter."

Adil Rashid had earlier bamboozled the Sri Lankan batters in Kandy as he claimed 3-19 from his four overs to decimate the innings. Curran said: "Adil has been such a star player for us for so long. We are hoping he can play a big part for us in the next few weeks, which is really exciting for us."

Phil Salt made the most of two lives to lead England's chase with 46 before rain brought an early end with England on 125-4 – with the tourists winning by 11 on the DLS method.

Victory puts England 1-0 up in the three-match series, with two more matches at the same venue before they travel to Mumbai to face Nepal in their T20 World Cup opener on February 8.

If England progress, as they should, from their group containing West Indies, Scotland, Nepal and Italy, their Super 8 matches will be held in Sri Lanka – in Kandy and in Colombo, where they clinched the ODI series.

"Winning is a habit, and we are hoping to keep doing that leading into the World Cup," Curran added.

Brook lied over NZ nightclub bust-up

FROM BACK PAGE

night in question, but Bethell and Tongue were reportedly fined for their involvement and are being investigated by the Cricket Regulator. In a new statement, Brook (top) said: "I accept responsibility for my actions and acknowledge that others were present.

"I regret my previous comments. My intention was to protect my team-mates from being drawn into a situation that arose as a result of my own decisions.

"I have apologised and will continue to reflect on the matter. This has been a challenging period, but one from which I am learning.

"I recognise I have more to learn regarding the off-field responsibilities that come with leadership and captaincy."

SCOREBOARD

First Twenty20 International
Sri Lanka v England
PALLEKELE: England win by 11 runs (DLS Method)

SRI LANKA

P Nissanka c Buttler b Rashid	23
R Mishara c Dawson b Overton	16
B Mendis c Overton b Rashid	37
K Asalanka c Bethell b Dawson	2
D de Silva c Curran b Rashid	11
K Liyanage lbw Dawson	1
M Shanaka c Brook b Curran	20
P Hasaranga b Overton	14
M Theekshana c Overton b Curran	0
M Pathirana b Curran	0
K Malinga not out	0
B4 lb2 w3	9
Total (16.2 overs)	**133**

Fall: 24, 76, 79, 89, 98, 98, 129, 129, 129.

Bowling: Curran 3-0-38-3, Archer 3-0-22-0, Overton 2.2-0-17-2, Dawson 4-0-31-2, Rashid 4-0-19-3.

ENGLAND

P Salt c Sub b Shanaka	46
J Buttler b Malinga	17
J Bethell c Shanaka b Malinga	9
T Banton c Asalanka b Pathirana	29
H Brook not out	16
S Curran not out	1
Lb4 w3	7
Total (4 wkts., 15 overs)	**125**

Fall: 36, 48, 87, 123.

Bowling: Theekshana 3-0-31-0, Pathirana 4-0-18-1, Malinga 2-0-24-2, Hasaranga 4-0-36-0, Shanaka 2-0-12-1.

Umpires: R Wimalasiri & R Kottahachchi.

WORLD OF SPORT

CRICKET

FORMER MCC president Phillip Hodson has been fined £1,000 for "offensive and discriminatory" comments in an after-dinner speech.

Hodson, then deputy chair at Yorkshire, made two jokes related to sexual orientation and people living with a disability.

The Cricket Discipline Panel says he must also attend a training course on equality and diversity.

Pick-me-up for Kelly

BOXING

BY **MARTIN DOMIN**

JOSH KELLY is determined to put Sunderland on the map – before old pal Jordan Pickford beats him to it.

JOSH KELLY

Kelly will attempt to dethrone undefeated super-welterweight Bakhram Murtazaliev in neighbouring Newcastle tonight to be crowned as Sunderland's first boxing world champion.

Kelly and Everton keeper Pickford played together in Sunderland's academy.

"I grew up with Pickford," Kelly said. "I was out running and Pickford drove past and beeped. He was in a big Range Rover.

"I wondered if I'd chosen the wrong sport, but it only made me more determined, and I feel like I'm reaping the rewards now."

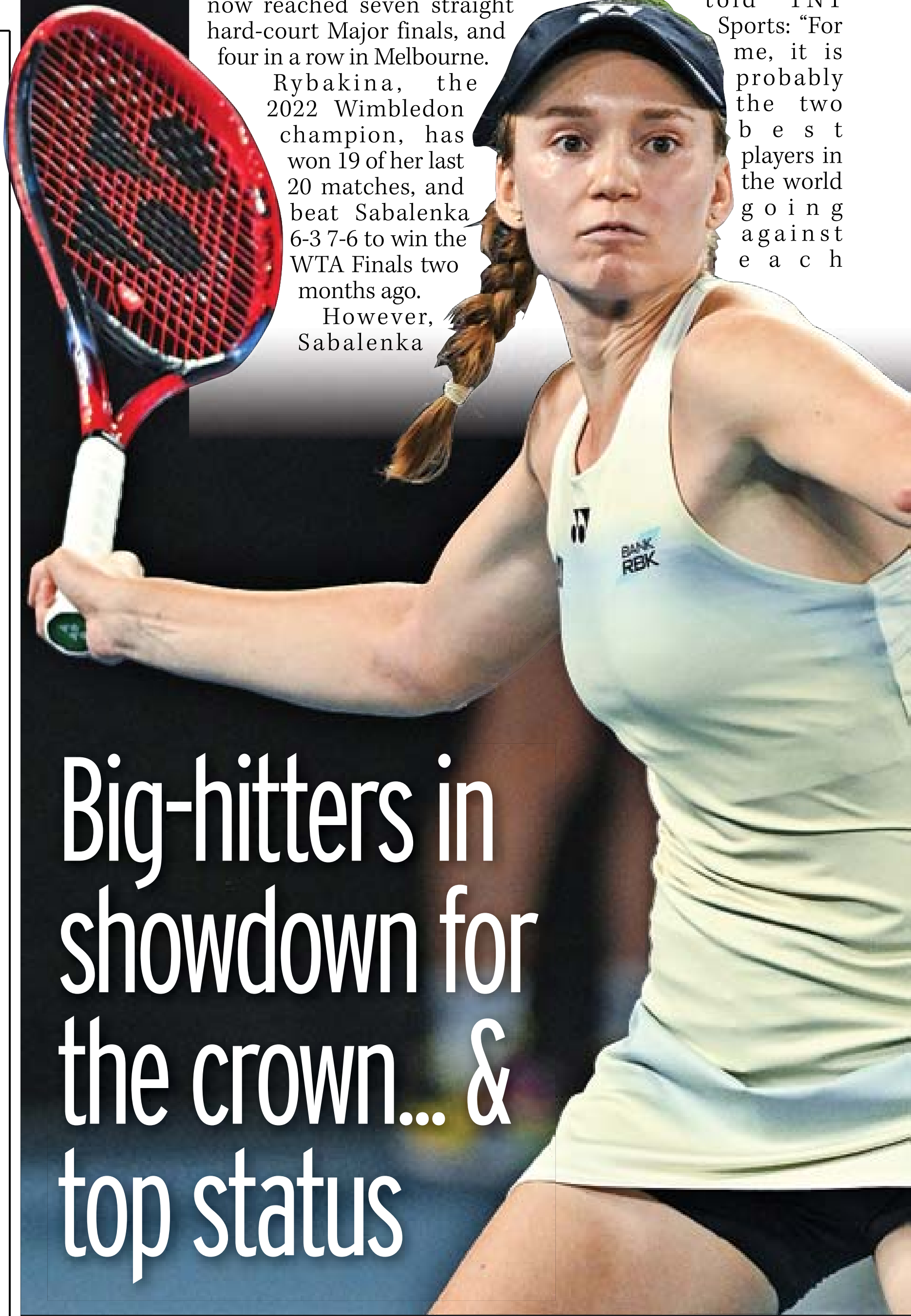
GOLF

MICHAEL BRENNAN was thrown out of the Farmers Insurance Open after being caught with banned equipment.

While the return of Brooks Koepka to the PGA Tour captured most attention at Torrey Pines, Brennan – who was tied 55th after posting a two-under par opening round of 70 – breached Model Local Rule G-11 by utilising unauthorised green-reading materials.

Blood Pressure Check?
I can serve that
You're never too far from a Pharmacist
Boots
With you. For life.
NHS Blood Pressure Check Service. Eligibility criteria apply. England only. Subject to availability.

CLASH


EL OF A TALENT Rybakina goes into the final having won 19 of her last 20 matches

BY **YASMIN SYED** in Melbourne

ARYNA SABALENKA and Elena Rybakina will battle for the Australian Open title – and the bragging rights of being the most in-form player on the women's tour.

World No.1 Sabalenka has now reached seven straight hard-court Major finals, and four in a row in Melbourne.

Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion, has won 19 of her last 20 matches, and beat Sabalenka 6-3 7-6 to win the WTA Finals two months ago.

However, Sabalenka won a tough three-setter against Rybakina in the 2023 final here, winning her first Major title.

Neither woman has dropped a set on their way to the final – and former doubles No.1 and Davis Cup winner Jamie Murray told TNT Sports: "For me, it is probably the two best players in the world going against each

Big-hitters in showdown for the crown... & top status

ARMED & DANGEROUS Djokovic after beating Sinner

DJOK'S

BY **YASMIN SYED**

HISTORY will be on the line when world No.1 Carlos Alcaraz faces 24-time Major winner Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open final.

The Spaniard, 22, can become the youngest man to complete the career Grand Slam by lifting the trophy.

But Djokovic is now the closest he's been to a record 25th Grand Slam title in almost two years.

The No.4 seed is through to a Major final for the first time since Wimbledon 2024, when

OF THE TITANS

other. I think it depends on who executes best, and who serves and gets that ball in play."

Sabalenka and Rybakina are both big hitters, and there will be little separating them.

Former British No.1 Tim Henman explained: "They want to be the one bossing the points, being proactive rather than defensive, trying to get the ball back in play."

No.1 seed Sabalenka expects the same. The 27-year-old said: "I think her shots are heavy, deep, flat balls. It's not easy to work with. I'm looking forward to battling this power."

For Sabalenka, a third Australian Open title and fifth Major – all of which have come on hard courts – would solidify her status as the strongest player on this surface.

But Rybakina has found her best form after a few tough years with injury withdrawals and coach issues – and won her last nine matches against fellow top-10 players.

This time last year, her coach, Stefano Vukov (bottom right), was suspended by the WTA for a breach of the code of conduct, but appealed and was cleared to return in August.

And the world No.5 credits him for her recent run of form. She said: "It's a big help, because of course he knows me the best.

"With his advice on the court during the matches, it definitely makes a difference."

One thing Rybakina has over Sabalenka is a stronger serve. At six-feet tall, she's fired down 41 aces on her way to the final. But Sabalenka has a renewed mental edge.

She suffered tough losses in the Australian Open and French Open finals last year, then recovered to win the US Open.

She said: "I actually know what was wrong in all of those finals that I played and I lost, and I would say that last year was lots of lessons, lots of things to learn about myself, and definitely not going to happen again this season.

"It's just a different mentality that I will try to have in each final that I play. I feel like those frustrations were coming from not agreeing with what's going on in the moment, and right now my mentality is I'm ready to do whatever. I'm ready to go out there and fight with what I have and do everything I can."

Not since 1999 into 2000 has the line-up for the Championship matches at the WTA Finals and the Australian Open been the same.

Sabalenka and Rybakina are part of a talented group of top players, along with Iga Swiatek, Coco Gauff and others.

But the women's tour has been crying out for a big rivalry at the Majors – and this hard-hitting pair could fix that.

> It's the two best players in the world going at it

COLOUR-FUL OF OPTIMISM No.1 seed Sabalenka is aiming to lift her second successive Major after winning the US Open last September, above

RECORD v ALCARAZ'S SLAM BID

he lost to Alcaraz. The Serb ended Jannik Sinner's reign at Melbourne Park with a heroic 3-6 6-3 4-6 6-4 6-4 victory, delivering the final blow at 1.30am.

No.2 seed Sinner lifted the trophy here in 2024 and 2025 – his last loss before that came in the fourth round three years ago.

After coming through a 4hr 9min battle, Djokovic, 38, said: "It feels surreal.

"The quality of tennis was extremely high, and I knew this was the only way to win against him. He won the past five matches against me, and I told him at the net, thanks for allowing me this.

"He pushed me to the very limit.

"Tonight has been one of the – if not the best – support for me in Australia.

"I'm looking forward to seeing Carlos on Sunday, even though it feels as if I've won tonight.

"I hope I'll have enough gas to stay toe-to-toe with him."

It was a fantastic Friday in Melbourne Park, as both men's semi-finals went to five sets here for the first time since 2017.

There had been no five-setters on Rod Laver Arena this year until now.

Alcaraz won the longest semi-final in tournament history, needing 5hrs 27mins to overcome No.3 seed Alexander Zverev.

The six-time Major winner looked in control until he started cramping at 4-4 in the third set.

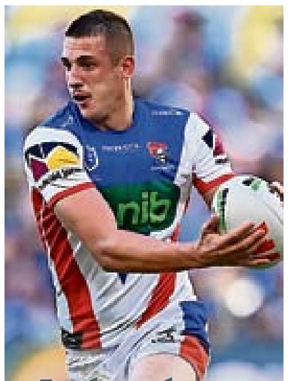
But Alcaraz, 22, reeled off the last four games in a row to clinch a 6-4 7-6 6-7 6-7 7-5 victory. After reaching his first Australian Open final, the world No.1 said: "This one was one of the more demanding matches that I have ever played in my career so far.

"Physically, we just pushed each other to the limit today.

"My body could be better, but that's normal after five and a half hours.

"I will try to do whatever it takes just to be ready."

MARATHON MAN Alcaraz saw off Zverev in an epic five-set clash



Jake has Hull of a to-do list

BY **JAMES SMAILES**

JAKE ARTHUR arrived at Hull FC with ambitions to break the hearts of one half of his new home city – and shatter his dad's hopes, too.

Aussie half-back Arthur (above), 23, whose dad Brad coaches Leeds Rhinos, is confident the team that Hull head coach John Cartwright has put together can topple champions Hull KR.

"I've come here wanting to win," Arthur said. "We want to win the Challenge Cup, the league leaders, and try to win the competition.

"I'm 100 percent confident we've a team who can do that."

Arthur, who will partner club captain Aidan Sezer in the halves, added: "We've got a really good squad, a nice mix.

"And it has been building nicely between me and Sezer."

10 to tackle

RATINGS
0-3 Oh dear
4-6 Small beer
7-9 So near
10 Sporting Seer

1. Which brothers each scored tries for Bristol Bears in the 2025-2026 Investec Champions Cup home win over Section Paloise?

2. Prior to 2025, when was the last year that Kansas City Chiefs failed to qualify for the NFL play-offs?

3. Of which 2025-2026 WSL club was Eder Maestre appointed manager in January?

4. Which famous cricketer became the first president of the English Bowling Association in 1903?

5. Which American rider won the MotoGP title in 2006?

6. Which Canadian city hosted the 1954 Commonwealth Games?

7. Which Boston Celtics player was NBA MVP three years in a row in the 1980s?

8. Who was the first female gymnast to get a perfect score at the Olympics?

9. To whom did Frank Bruno lose his first World Heavyweight title fight?

10. Which snooker ball is worth three points?

ANSWERS: 1 Benjamin and Santiago Grondona 2 2014 3 London City Lionesses 4 W G Grace 5 Nicky Hayden 6 Vancouver 7 Larry Bird 8 Nadia Comaneci 9 Tim Witherspoon 10 Green

RED ALERT Wilson stuns old club Liverpool

WILSON TIMING IS SPOT ON TO PROVE WORTH

BY **JOHN CROSS**

Man United v **Fulham**
Tomorrow, KO 2pm

HARRY WILSON is enjoying the best season of his career.

He is at the top of his game - despite all the uncertainty over his Fulham future.

Wilson, 28, has scored eight goals, provided four assists and has already beaten his best returns in any season.

His goals have been crackers, including a fabulous finish against Liverpool and a worldie against Crystal Palace.

The Wales international started out at Liverpool and was seen as a huge talent for the future.

But he then had loans at Crewe, Hull, Derby, Bournemouth and Cardiff before finding his home at Fulham.

Wilson, who cost £12million, is in his fifth season at Fulham and his contract ends this summer. There will be no shortage of takers.

The timing is great for Wilson, who could go to the World Cup with Wales. His record of 17 goals in 67 caps is impressive at international level.

Fulham are keen to keep him, but he is still on his original contract, which begs the question of why they have not renewed it before now.

The reality is that, before this season, he had not really caught fire. Wilson was getting into the same positions - but this season he is putting the chances away, meaning he is high on confidence.

He has always had the talent, belief and ability. But he was in-and-out for Fulham, who have also signed Oscar Bobb from Manchester City.

Manager Marco Silva insists they want to keep Wilson, but the likelihood is he will go in the summer as a free agent. Aston Villa, who have Champions League ambitions, are keen, along with Leeds, who failed to get a deal over the line last summer.

Brentford and Sunderland are also admirers.

Some players cannot handle the uncertainty of being a free agent. Others thrive and chase a contract.

Wilson has not allowed himself to become distracted by the uncertainty.

He is hitting all the right notes at just the right time.

No rush over Bruno

FROM BACK PAGE

that's something we've got to work towards together, but Bruno's been fantastic since I've been here.

"I've got nothing but good things to say about him.

"That's not to get too far ahead. That's (his future) on the agenda a little bit, but my main agenda is getting through the game on Sunday with Fulham." Carrick, circle, added: "Bruno's fully committed. There's absolutely no issues. Things further down the line (will be) addressed towards the end of the season.

Bruno knows his next deal will be the last major one of his career, and that he needs to cash in.

United would have to offer the 31-year-old an improved deal of around £400,000 a week to keep him. His current deal runs until 2027, but he has a buy-out clause of £60million.

FORWARD ROLE

Howe insists Toon have 'moved on' but admits Isak a hard act to follow

HARD TO REPLACE Isak has been missed on Tyneside... but injury has ruined his short career at Liverpool so far

LIVERPOOL v NEWCASTLE
Premier League: Kick-off 8pm

BY **LEE RYDER**

EDDIE HOWE insists Newcastle have "moved on" from the summer saga surrounding Alexander Isak's acrimonious move to Liverpool.

But the Magpies boss conceded they are still making up for the loss of the Swedish striker on the pitch.

As Newcastle began preparations for this season, Isak quit the club's training camp before engineering his £125million move to Liverpool by going on strike.

Howe is full of respect for Liverpool, but heads to Merseyside looking to end a long run without a Premier League victory at Anfield that stretches back to 1994.

Isak can't play after suffering a broken leg at Tottenham earlier in the season, but Howe said talk of the Sweden star is no longer a factor in the Toon squad.

"We have moved on," said the Magpies boss. "It is irrelevant what happened then. We are not looking back, we are looking forward."

The reverse fixture in August was a highly-charged affair as Isak remained a Newcastle player and waited for his move to Merseyside to be sanctioned.

Asked if there was animosity behind the scenes, Howe said: "Certainly not on our side. We are just preparing for a game of football.

"All the stuff that happened in the summer is very much in the past. It's always about tomorrow and making sure you are prepared for future battles. All our focus since the summer transfer window ended has been on trying to make sure we are strong and not worrying about any other club."

Howe splashed out a combined £119m to bring in Nick Woltemade and Yoane Wissa but insisted any club losing a player of the calibre of Isak would need time to readjust.

"You lose a player like Alex... and let's put this right, Liverpool paid the money they did because he's an outstanding footballer, an unbelievable talent," said Howe.

"When you take that player away from your team, it's going to change the dynamics.

"Then you have to try to find a way of, not replacing him, but finding a player or players who can still make the team really effective. We're still in that moment and we've been trying to do that all season. The guys who have come in have done a very good job."

Newcastle beat Liverpool 2-1 in the Carabao Cup final last season to give the Magpies something of an edge going to Anfield.

Howe is excited about pitting his wits against Arne Slot and said: "Historically, it has been a great fixture and we want to do it justice by being the best we can."

Newcastle beat Liverpool at Wembley thanks to an Isak goal but the game is remembered on Tyneside for the intensity levels on show that afternoon.

Howe said: "It's something we've asked for every week. Our pressing idea has not changed.

"Our delivery might not have been as consistent this season, in part, I think, due to the number of games that we've had."

Van Dijk: I need to be best version of myself

BY **PAUL GORST**

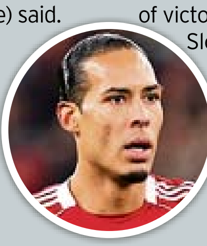
VIRGIL VAN DIJK has denied the Liverpool squad are playing for their futures.

And the skipper has challenged his team-mates to block out the "noise" ahead of this evening's visit from Newcastle.

Van Dijk and his colleagues are aiming to secure their first Premier League win of 2026.

But the Dutchman rejected the idea that several in the squad now have to perform to avoid being sold in the summer. "The reality is some players are running out of contract," Van Dijk (circle) said. "Some players are still having a year after this, like myself.

"But we have to see how the season goes. Hopefully it's successful. But it's not about players playing to keep their jobs. We have very, very good players."



The Reds beat Qarabag 6-0 in the Champions League on Wednesday - their biggest margin of victory since manager Arne Slot arrived in 2024.

But at domestic level, last week's 3-2 defeat to Bournemouth - the fifth time they conceded after 90 minutes - was their seventh this season.

"It's going to be a totally different game, but we have to show a reaction to a disappointing night at Bournemouth, where a lot of noise came our way," Van Dijk added. "Well-deserved, of course, but it's not easy.

"We don't have the consistency. We can't, so far, build enough on good performances. That's something we have to improve.

"I don't need to use that criticism personally as fuel. I have a responsibility to the club, to the players, to perform, to be at my best, and to lead the team. The responsibility I feel is to be the best version of myself again."

PEP LOVES WINTER BLUES

Lijnders hails transfer window deals for Semenyo and Guehi

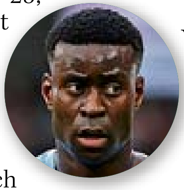
JAN GOOD SIGNING Antoine Semenyo has hit the ground running

TOTTENHAM v MAN CITY
Premier League: Tomorrow, KO 4.30pm, Sky

BY **SIMON BAJKOWSKI**

PEP LIJNDERS believes Manchester City have pulled off something difficult in the January window by landing two top transfers as they look to challenge on four fronts.

The Blues have spent £82.5m on bringing in Antoine Semenyo, 26, and Marc Guehi, 25, (inset) to try to boost their hopes of silverware.



City have pointed out that both players have been signed for the long term rather than as immediate fixes, with each agreeing contracts until 2031.

However, they have undeniably given manager Pep Guardiola a short-term boost.

Semenyo has already scored in three different competitions for the Blues and Guehi kept a clean sheet on his debut in the Premier League to help a team that had been faltering with injuries. And the fact that proven Premier League stars Guehi and Semenyo have been able to go straight into the side has impressed Etihad assistant coach Lijnders.

City are not used to spending so much in the winter window, but they could have landed two bargains if it helps them to win trophies.

"We have excellent business with Antoine and Marc," said Lijnders ahead of tomorrow's match at Tottenham.

"We added strength. You always search for somebody who can improve your first XI – and that's not easy for Manchester City.

"If you can find players to improve your first XI, that's good business.

"That's what we tried to do and I feel like we have succeeded."

City have also completed the £27m sale of winger Oscar Bobb to Fulham.

Ex-Liverpool coach Lijnders said: "I'm really happy for him. It's a big compliment for our academy because another player makes a big step who has quality to play in the Premier League."

In brighter news on the injury front, central defender Ruben Dias will return to training next week and could face Liverpool next Sunday.

Jeremy Doku is also expected to make a fairly swift return, despite coming off against Galatasaray in midweek.

The winger was forced off in the first half with a calf problem.

"It's a similar injury to the last one," added Lijnders. "The last one took 18 days, I presume this will be a little shorter. Jeremy is a robust player."

Guardiola skipped the press conference after giving a speech in support of Palestinian children at a charity concert in Barcelona on Thursday.

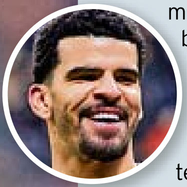
Solanke return is like 'new signing'

BY **DARREN WELLS**

THOMAS FRANK is not ruing Tottenham's failure to land Antoine Semenyo because Dominic Solanke's return has been like having a "new signing".

Spurs were beaten to Semenyo's signature by tomorrow's opponents Manchester City, with Solanke's former Bournemouth team-mate already scoring three times for his new club.

But Solanke (inset), who was a £60m buy in August 2024, has scored twice in his last three games since returning from a five-month injury layoff earlier this month, in a huge boost to Spurs and boss Frank.



"To miss our main striker, I don't think any team is happy with that for six months," Frank said. "That's been a blow, but hey, that's what we need to handle.

"To have Dom back in, not only for his goalscoring abilities, but also his hold-up play, link play, ability to press, and just that presence on the pitch and in the changing room, that's big.

"It feels a little bit like a new signing and he will only get better over the next few weeks."

Despite missing out on Semenyo, Spurs have agreed a deal for 18-year-old West Ham whizzkid Elisha Sowunmi.

Rogers can play lead role for Villa

A VILLA v BRENTFORD
Tomorrow, 2pm, Sky Sports

BY **JOHN TOWNLEY**

MORGAN ROGERS is ready to become a leader for Aston Villa on and off the pitch as the club navigates an injury crisis in midfield.

The onus on Villa's more established players has only increased in recent days after Youri Tielemans joined Boubacar Kamara and John McGinn on the sidelines with long-term injuries.

Villa have moved quickly to secure Douglas Luiz on loan, and with Ross Barkley returning to training, their options have increased.

But a cloud hangs over the dressing room following the run of injuries.

As a result, Rogers, 23, feels a greater responsibility to step up and deliver.

"Yeah, people are probably looking at me a bit more and I have to deliver," he said ahead of tomorrow's visit by Brentford.

"Growing up, getting older and playing the kind of games I am playing, I need to take that step up myself and kind of be a leader in the group.

"I know I am still young and learning off the more experienced players, but I can still be a leader on the pitch and show the way."

Villa boss Unai Emery is hopeful Ollie Watkins can feature, despite a hamstring injury. The striker was forced off during Villa's win over RB Salzburg on Thursday.

"He had a scan and it's not a clear injury," Emery said. "We will see tomorrow."

STEPPING UP Morgan Rogers is keen to deliver

KEITH MR MIX-IT

BY **DARREN WELLS**

BRENTFORD boss Keith Andrews is happy for his team to remain "unpredictable".

The eighth-placed Bees visit Aston Villa tomorrow after back-to-back defeats.

Andrews (inset), in his maiden campaign in the dugout, has already beaten Villa twice using 4-2-3-1 in a league victory in August before Carabao Cup success a month later achieved with a 3-5-2 system.

"I think performance levels overall have got consistently to a good point, but we always want more," he said.

"We've had some really good results and played in different ways, with different systems.

"We like to be slightly unpredictable and not make it easy for the opposition."

SPORT IN BRIEF

BASKETBALL

NBA: Philadelphia 113 Sacramento 111, Washington 109 Milwaukee 99, Chicago 113 Miami 116, Atlanta 86 Houston 104, Dallas 121 Charlotte 123, Denver 107 Brooklyn 103, Phoenix 114 Detroit 96, Minnesota 123 Oklahoma City 111.

GOLF

THE DP WORLD TOUR BAHRAIN CHAMPIONSIP (Royal GC, Kingdom of Bahrain, Bahrain)—**2nd Rnd** (Gbr & Irl unless stated, Par 72): Play suspended due to darkness. **128** C Hill 67 61, **132** F Schott (Ger) 65 67, **135** U Coussaud (Fra) 67 68, **136** I Elvira (Spa) 69 67, A Del Rey (Spa) 65 71, J Guerrier (Fra) 69 67, S Garcia (Spa) 70 66, D Hillier (Nzl) 66 70, J Luiten (Ned) 71 65, A Pavan (Ita) 69 67, B Stone (Rsa) 68 68, C Jarvis (Rsa) 71 65, J. C. Ritchie (Rsa) 71 65, S Sharma (Ind) 66 70, **137** G Forrest 71 66, N von Dellingshausen (Ger) 66 71, J Campillo (Spa) 68 69, A Fitzpatrick 69 68, B Schmidt 68 69, H Du Plessis (Rsa) 68 69, N Kimsey 72 65, **138** P Reed (USA) 71 67, M Couvra (Fra) 69 69, O Lindell (Fin) 67 71, F Laporta (Ita) 70 68, J Scrivener (Aus) 70 68, D Young 69 69, H Townsend (Swe) 70 68, J Broomhead (Rsa) 72 66, J Skov Olesen (Den) 70 68.

SNOOKER

WST MACHINESEEKER GERMAN MASTERS (Tempodrom, Berlin, Germany)—**Quarter Finals**: S Murphy (Eng) bt K Wilson (Eng) 5-1; A Carter (Eng) bt S Bingham (Eng) 5-1. **2nd rd**: G Xiao (Chn) bt J Higgins (Sco) 5-3; J Trump (Eng) bt S Jiahui (Chn) 5-2.

SQUASH

PSA WORLD TOUR TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS (New York, USA)**—Men's Final**: (1) Mostafa Asal (Egy) bt (2) Paul Coll (Nzl) 3-0. **Women's Final**: (1) Hania El Hammamy (Egy) bt (4) Olivia Weaver (USA) 3-2.
SQUASH ON FIRE OPEN 2026 (Washington, USA)—**2nd rd: Men's**: (1) Mohamed ElShorBagy (Eng) bt Noor Zaman (Pak) 3-1; (3) Fares Dessouky (Egy) bt Sam Todd (Eng) 3-2; (6) Declan James (Eng) bt Muhammad Asim Khan (Pak) 3-2; (7) Raphael Kandra (Ger) bt Nathan Lake (Eng) 3-0; (8) Mohamed ElSherbini (Egy) bt Patrick Rooney (Eng) 3-2. **Women's**: (3) Melissa Alves (Fra) bt Lucy Beecroft (Eng) 3-2; (1) Georgina Kennedy (Eng) bt Menna Hamed (Egy) 3-0; Jana Swaify (Egy) bt (4) Tesni Murphy (Wal) 3-0.

TENNIS

AUSTRALIAN OPEN (Melbourne, Australia)**—Men's Semi-finals: (1)** C Alcaraz (Spa) bt **(3)** A Zverev (Ger) 6-4 7-6 (7-5) 6-7 (3-7) 6-7 (4-7) 7-5, **(4)** N Djokovic (Ser) bt **(2)** J Sinner (Ita) 3-6 6-3 4-6 6-4 6-4. **Mixed Doubles finals:** O Gadecki (Aus) & J Peers (Aus) bt K Mladenovic (Fra) & M Guinard (Fra) 4-6 6-3 10-8.

TODAY'S DIARY

CRICKET

Fifth Twenty20 Int'nal: India v New Zealand (Thiruvananthapuram, 1.30pm). **Second Twenty20 Int'nal**: Pakistan v Australia (Lahore, 1pm). UAE v Ireland (Dubai, 06am). **Third Twenty20 Int'nal**: South Africa v West Indies (Johannesburg, 4pm).

GOLF

DP World Tour Bahrain Championsip (Kingdom of Bahrain). **USPGA Tour Farmers Insurance Open** (San Diego, California, USA). **LPGA Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions** (Orlando, Florida, USA).

ICE HOCKEY

Elite League: Fife Flyers v Guildford Flames, Manchester Storm v Sheffield Steelers, Nottingham Panthers v Dundee Stars.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Betfred Championship (6pm)**:** Barrow v Salford RLFC.

RUGBY UNION

Premiership Rugby Cup Pool A (3pm)**:** Exeter v Sale.
Pool B (3.05)**:** Northampton v Leicester.
United Rugby Championship (3pm)**:** Leinster v Edinburgh (5.30), Lions v Blue Bulls (12.30), Ospreys v Dragons (7.45), Sharks v Stormers, Ulster v Cardiff Rugby (7.45), Zebre v Connacht.
Champ Rugby (3pm)**:** Ampthill v Worcester (1.30), Caldy v Nottingham (2pm), Coventry v Chinnor, Doncaster v Cornish Pirates (2.30), Ealing Trailfinders v Richmond, Hartpury RFC v Bedford (2.30), London Scottish v Cambridge.

SNOOKER

WST Machineseeker German Masters (Tempodrom, Berlin, Germany).

TENNIS

Australian Open (Melbourne Park, Melbourne, Australia).

IT AZ TO BE YOU Howe faces the Azerbaijan side

Toon bag a trip to Qarabag

NEWCASTLE will take on Qarabag of Azerbaijan for a place in the Champions League last 16.

The Magpies finished 12th in the league phase to miss out on an automatic last-16 berth.

Qarabag lost 6-0 to Liverpool in the league phase, but drew 2-2 with Chelsea. Eddie Howe's men will face either Chelsea or Barcelona should they win.

Seeded Newcastle will be at home in the second leg on February 24 or 25. The first leg will be on either February 17 or 18.

Nottingham Forest have been drawn against Turkish side Fenerbahce in the Europa League play-off.

Forest will play either Danish side Midtjylland or Real Betis of Spain if they make it through. Celtic will face German side Stuttgart for a place in the last 16.

The first legs will be on February 19, with the return on February 26.

Grealish's WC agony

BY **JEREMY CROSS**

JACK GREALISH is facing World Cup heartbreak after being ruled out for the rest of the season.

Grealish (below) must undergo foot surgery, after the Manchester City loanee suffered a stress fracture in Everton's clash with Aston Villa earlier this month.

He could be out for up to five months – leaving him no chance of making Thomas Tuchel's England squad this summer, despite having rediscovered some of his best form with the Toffees.

Everton boss David Moyes said: "We believe Jack's probably going to need surgery, but that's still not absolutely confirmed.

"It probably rules him out for the rest of the season, yes.

"It's really disappointing for the player, for the club and all of us. He's such an important part for us, a big character. We'll miss him."

ARSENAL'S LONG AND GRINDING ROAD TO THE TITLE

SHOCKER FOR GYOK

Gyokeres was signed for £64m to score goals. He just has not done that enough

Top of the league but the stuttering has started with strikers struggling for goals

LEEDS UNITED v ARSENAL
Premier League: Kick-Off 3pm

BY **JOHN CROSS**

THE path to true love rarely runs smoothly.

And after three near misses, Mikel Arteta decided to take Arsenal on a different route to glory.

This season has been all about getting the job done. Arteta has been characterised as a risk-averse, safety-first manager to finally deliver the Holy Grail of the Premier League title.

That is fine if you are getting the results. But if you have a blip – the wheels have come off Arsenal's title bandwagon somewhat after taking just two points from their last three games – then it becomes the perfect storm.

Arsenal's football has been pretty dull and they are going through their biggest dip in form this season. Manchester United legend Paul Scholes this week claimed Arsenal would be the worst team to win the title in Premier League history. That seems a stretch. But, even more cuttingly, Scholes said: "If you're thinking of picking a team of the season and picking the front four, nobody from the Arsenal team gets in that.

"Look at previous champions – Liverpool's forwards, brilliant. Possibly the only one is Saka, (right) and I don't think he's been brilliant. He's not scored many goals this year or assists."

And that is the point. Arsenal's forwards have been the issue. Bukayo Saka has managed four league goals this season and three assists. He is now 13 games without a goal in all competitions.

Incredibly, only 57 percent of Arsenal's league goals have come from open play this season. And that puts them 17th out of 20. They have scored 16 goals in the league from set-pieces.

Arteta has made Arsenal deadly from corners and free-kicks. But it does beg the question: why? First and foremost, they are playing to their strengths. Gabriel is such an important player. He is a force at set-

FARKE: WE'VE HAD ELL OF A RIDE

BY **ISAAC JOHNSON**

DANIEL FARKE insists Leeds are a different animal to the side that were rolled over 5-0 against Arsenal back in August.

A switch to a 3-5-2 formation in November has worked wonders, as has the form of Dominic Calvert-Lewin who has scored eight goals in his last 11 games. Leeds have lost just once in their past 10 Premier League games and the visit by the Gunners is eagerly anticipated, not feared.

Farke (left) said: "They are the league leaders and are in the best position to win the title, so for that it's the toughest task that we can have.

"We also know if we are at the top of our game and we are at our very best, and especially at home at Elland Road, we can deliver a performance and fight for points against every opponent in the world.

"We will also go into this game with the necessary respect and we know that we probably need an outstanding day to have a chance to win points against this outstanding Arsenal side." After a season-opening win at home to Everton, Leeds came crashing back down to earth with that five-goal thrashing against Arsenal.

Farke added: "What we took out of this (the 5-0 defeat at the Emirates) is that we never can underestimate a small situation, that each of the details can be decisive."

SCORING IN THE OPEN... OR NOT

PL 2025-26 Goals from Open Play

Man City	39
Liverpool	29
Man United	26
Aston Villa	25
Brentford	25
Arsenal	24
Bournemouth	24
Brighton	23
Chelsea	23
Fulham	22
Tottenham	21
Burnley	17
Newcastle	17
Everton	16
Leeds United	16
Forest	16
West Ham	16
Sunderland	14
Crystal Palace	10
Wolves	9

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	23	15	5	3	42	17	50
Man City	23	14	4	5	47	21	46
Aston Villa	23	14	4	5	35	25	46
Man Utd	23	10	8	5	41	34	38
Chelsea	23	10	7	6	39	25	37
Liverpool	23	10	6	7	35	32	36
Fulham	23	10	4	9	32	32	34
Brentford	23	10	3	10	35	32	33
Newcastle	23	9	6	8	32	29	33
Everton	23	9	6	8	25	26	33
Sunderland	23	8	9	6	24	26	33
Brighton	23	7	9	7	33	31	30
Bournemouth	23	7	9	7	38	43	30
Tottenham	23	7	7	9	33	31	28
Crystal Palace	23	7	7	9	24	28	28
Leeds	23	6	8	9	31	38	26
Nottm Forest	23	7	4	12	23	34	25
West Ham	23	5	5	13	27	45	20
Burnley	23	3	6	14	25	44	15
Wolves	23	1	5	17	15	43	8

FIGHTING THEIR CORNER

SET-PIECE GOALS (EXCL. PENS)

	Total
Arsenal	15
Man United	13
Chelsea	12
Leeds United	12
Tottenham	12
Bournemouth	11
Newcastle	11
Aston Villa	10
Palace	10
Fulham	9
Everton	8
Sunderland	8
West Ham	8
Brighton	7
Burnley	6
Man City	6
Brentford	5
Liverpool	5
Forest	5
Wolves	4

OPEN-PLAY GOALS

PREM LEAGUE 2025-26	GOALS	OP	%
Manchester City	47	39	83.0%
Liverpool	35	29	82.9%
Aston Villa	35	25	71.4%
Brentford	35	25	71.4%
Brighton	33	23	69.7%
Nottingham Forest	23	16	69.6%
Fulham	32	22	68.8%
Burnley	25	17	68.0%
Everton	25	16	64.0%
Tottenham	33	21	63.6%
Manchester United	41	26	63.4%
Bournemouth	38	24	63.2%
Wolves	15	9	60.0%
West Ham	27	16	59.3%
Chelsea	39	23	59.0%
Sunderland	24	14	58.3%
Arsenal	42	24	57.1%
Newcastle	32	17	53.1%
Leeds	31	16	51.6%
Crystal Palace	24	10	41.7%

CHAMPS WITH LOWEST TOP SCORERS

Premier League Champion	Season	Top Scorer	Goals
Chelsea	2004/2005	Lampard	13
Manchester City	2020/2021	Gundogan	13
Manchester United	1995/1996	Cantona	14
Manchester Unites	1992/1993	Hughes	15
Manchester United	2000/2001	Sheringham	15
Manchester City	2021/2022	De Bruyne	15

pieces. And, despite being at the top and only outscored by Manchester City, it feels like they have struggled for goals.

It looks laboured and difficult. Viktor Gyokeres is joint top scorer with Leandro Trossard with five each in the league. Their forwards have not been great so they have had to look for other ways.

The lowest top scorer of a title-winning team in Premier League history are Frank Lampard and Ilkay Gundogan with 13 each for Chelsea in 2004/05 and Manchester City 2020/21 respectively.

With well over half the season gone, Arsenal are on course to beat that. Gyokeres has not worked. He was signed to score goals - and has not done that enough and his all-round play has been poor.

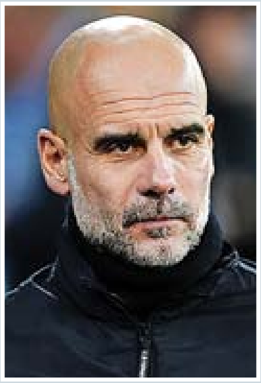
Arsenal have really missed Kai Havertz because he holds the ball up, he can bring others into lay and is particularly effective away from home. His return is well overdue.

Arsenal needed to strengthen their squad last summer. They spent big. Gyokeres cost £64m and has started most games.

Martin Zubimendi has been the biggest hit because none of the others – Eberechi Eze, Noni Madueke, Christian Norgaard, Piero Hincapie, Kepa and the highly-promising Cristian Mosquera – have been regulars.

They have depth but surely the strongest squad can only be classed as such if it wins the league. And Arsenal have a long way to go.

TEAMS: SEE PULLOUT PAGE 8



PEP THE BIG SPENDER

BY **TOM CANTON**

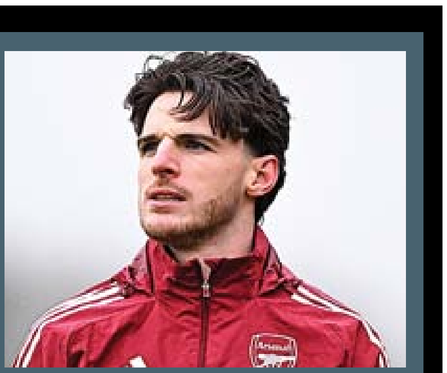
MIKEL ARTETA is not surprised Manchester City splashed the cash in a bid to hunt down Arsenal in the title race, claiming: "They will do everything to win".

The gap to the Gunners at the top of the table was reduced to four points as January signing Antoine Semenyo scored one of City's two goals and new boy Marc Guehi helped keep a clean sheet in the 2-0 win over Wolves.

For the second winter window in a row, Pep Guardiola has spent big to rejuvenate his squad. City have splurged more than £1.9billion since Guardiola's arrival and Arteta is not shocked they have opened the chequebook again.

"That's business," he said. "I know what they're going to do, and what they've been doing over the last 10, 15 years, so no surprise.

"They want to win, and they will do everything to win."



DECLAN KEY TO SUCCESS

BY **TOM CANTON**

MIKEL ARTETA has told Declan Rice he holds the key to Arsenal's Premier League title hopes.

Rice (above), 27, will make his 300th Premier League appearance this afternoon, becoming the fifth youngest player to reach the milestone after Wayne Rooney, James Milner, Gareth Barry and Raheem Sterling.

Despite striking a frustrated yet determined figure during this recent Gunners slump, Arteta offered great insight into the positive feedback he regularly shares with his star midfielder.

"In a healthy way, very much because they know they can come to me with any suggestions, especially how they feel and what is best for the team," he said.

"That is for sure. We talk about the game, how we live every single day here, and he has a big responsibility.

"He has the experience, the respect and admiration of the team and because he is someone that – when someone has to perform – he is always there."

He added: "I will use the word demanding and setting standards.

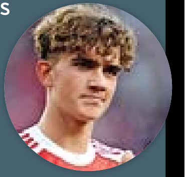
"He is the one who, big time, is there every single day with us, with team-mates and with himself, which is the best way to set standards."

KID IS MESSI TO THE MAX

BY **MATT MALTBY**

MIKEL ARTETA says Max Dowman is showing more promise than a young Lionel Messi after the 16-year-old wonderkid committed his future to Arsenal.

Dowman (below) has signed a pre-agreement with the Gunners which will see him sign a professional deal when he turns 17 on December 31.



The midfielder made his debut in Arsenal's 5-0 win against Leeds in August aged 15 years and 234 days.

His progress has been halted by an ankle injury.

But Arteta, who was on Barcelona's books at the same time as Messi, is expecting great things.

"What he has done with us, me personally, I haven't seen before. Only with a guy that used to play in Barcelona – but maybe not even that," he said.

Dowman was delighted with the Arsenal agreement.

"This means everything to me and my family," he said.

1-2-X GUIDE

TODAY

(3pm unless stated)

Premier League

2 Brighton v Everton ....
3 Chelsea v West Ham (5.30pm) ..
(Live on Sky Sports Main Event)
4 Leeds v Arsenal........................
5 Liverpool v Newcastle (8pm)......
(Live on TNT Sports 1)
9 Wolves v AFC Bournemouth ....

Sky Bet Championship

10 Blackburn v Hull ....
11 Ipswich v Preston ....
12 Leicester v Charlton (12.30pm) .
13 Middlesbrough v Norwich...........
14 Millwall v Sheff Utd ....
15 Oxford Utd v Birmingham...........
16 Portsmouth v West Brom...........
17 QPR v Coventry.........................
18 Sheff Wed v Wrexham (12.30pm)
19 Stoke v Southampton (12.30pm) .
(Live on Sky Sports Football)
20 Watford v Swansea ....

Sky Bet League One

21 Wimbledon v Bolton (12.30pm) .
22 Barnsley v Stevenage................
23 Bradford City v Doncaster (12.30pm) ....
24 Burton v Cardiff ....
25 Exeter v Rotherham ....
26 Leyton Orient v Port Vale ....
27 Luton v Blackpool ....
28 Mansfield v Wycombe ....
29 Northampton v Reading (2pm) ...
30 Peterborough v Huddersfield......
31 Stockport County v Plymouth .....
32 Wigan v Lincoln City..................

Sky Bet League Two

33 Accrington St v Cheltenham.......
34 Bristol Rovers v Newport Co (12.30pm) ......
35 Chesterfield v Walsall................
36 Crawley Tn v Harrogate Tn ....
37 Crewe v Colchester...................
38 Fleetwood Tn v Notts County .....
39 Gillingham v Bromley.................
40 Grimsby v MK Dons (12.30pm)..
41 Oldham v Cambridge Utd...........
42 Shrewsbury v Barnet.................
43 Swindon v Barrow.....................
Tranmere v Salford City ....

William Hill Scottish Premiership

45 Dundee Utd v Hearts (8pm).......
(Live on Sky Sports Football)
47 Kilmarnock v Aberdeen ....
48 Livingston v Motherwell ....
49 St Mirren v Dundee...................

William Hill Scottish Championship

Ayr v Raith................................
Dunfermline v Airdrieonians.......
Morton v Ross County...............
Queen's Park v Arbroath ....

William Hill Scottish League One

Alloa v Cove Rangers ....
East Fife v Montrose.................
Kelty Hearts v Hamilton.............
Queen of South v Inverness CT..
Stenhousemuir v Peterhead.......

William Hill Scottish League Two

Annan Athletic v Clyde..............
Dumbarton v Edinburgh City ......
East Kilbride v Forfar.................
Elgin v Spartans ....
Stirling v Stranraer....................

Enterprise National League

Boreham Wood v Boston Utd .....
Braintree Tn v Eastleigh ....
Carlisle v Altrincham ....
Hartlepool v Aldershot..............
Solihull Moors v York ....
Sutton v Brackley.....................

FA Trophy 5th round

AFC Fylde v Southport ....
AFC Telford v Yeovil ....
Chatham Tn v Southend............
FC Halifax v Kidderminster ....
Forest Green v Wealdstone........
Scunthorpe v Horsham.............
Tamworth v Marine ....
Walton & Hersham v Woking......

Women's Championship: Bristol City v Sunderland (5.15pm).

TOMORROW

Premier League

1 Aston Villa v Brentford (2pm).....
(Live on Sky Sports Premier League)
6 Manchester Utd v Fulham (2pm)
(Live on Sky Sports Main Event)
7 Nott Forest v Crystal P (2pm).....
8 Tottenham v Man City (4.30pm).
(Live on Sky Sports Main Event)

William Hill Scottish Premiership

44 Celtic v Falkirk.........................
46 Hibernian v Rangers (2pm)........
(Live on Premier Sports)

FIFA Women's Champions Cup Final

Arsenal v Corinthians (6pm) ......
(Live on Sky Sports Main Event)

Women's Super League

Brighton & Hve v London City (11.55am).....
Everton v Aston Villa (11.55am) ....
Man City v Chelsea (2.30pm) ....
(Live on BBC 1)
Man Utd v Liverpool FC (11.55am)..
(Live on Sky Sports Football)
West Ham v Tottenham (11.55am)..

Women's Championship: Birmingham City v Nottm Forest (2pm), Durham v Portsmouth (12noon), Newcastle v Ipswich (2pm), Sheff Utd v Charlton (1pm), Southampton v Crystal Palace (2pm).

DAILY EXPRESS
SPORT
express.co.uk/sport

SLAM-TASTIC

Djokovic and Alcaraz both win five-set classics

AUSTRALIAN OPEN: P74-75

MIKEL MUST END GRIND AND FIND FLAIR

SEE PAGES 78-79

I LIED TO PROTECT MY MATES

Brook admits 'regret' for initially insisting he was alone in nightclub row

FROM **SCOTT HUNT** IN KANDY

HARRY BROOK says that he regrets claiming he was alone when "clocked" by a nightclub bouncer in New Zealand – amid reports that Jacob Bethell and Josh Tongue are also under investigation.

Brook, 26, was fined by the England and Wales Cricket Board for the incident in October and apologised to England fans at the start of the tour of Sri Lanka.

The England white-ball captain had also insisted he was out alone on the

TURN TO PAGE 73, COLUMN 3

BOUNCE BACK Bethell, far left, and Tongue have been linked to the night out with Brook (main)

SAM DOES TRICK TO SINK SRI LANKANS

T20 REPORT: PAGE 73

WAITING GAME United skipper Bruno Fernandes

No rush for Bruno talks

BY **JEREMY CROSS**

MICHAEL CARRICK has revealed Manchester United will wait until the summer to resolve the future of captain Bruno Fernandes.

The Portuguese midfielder is considering his next move – and will be inundated with offers at the end of the season.

Fernandes has become disillusioned with how the club is run and the managerial changes. He came close to leaving last summer but rejected the chance to join the Saudi Pro League.

While Fernandes has been impressed with the impact Carrick has made as interim manager, he wants to see who the next permanent boss will be – and if United get back into the Champions League.

Carrick said: "We all want to win things, we all want to get better. We want to be successful and

TURN TO PAGE 76, COLUMN 1

DAILY EXPRESS Fever Pitch
YOUR FOOTBALL WEEKEND STARTS HERE
Barry says Villa Park stunner 'best of my career' but vows plenty more to come

FREE INSIDE

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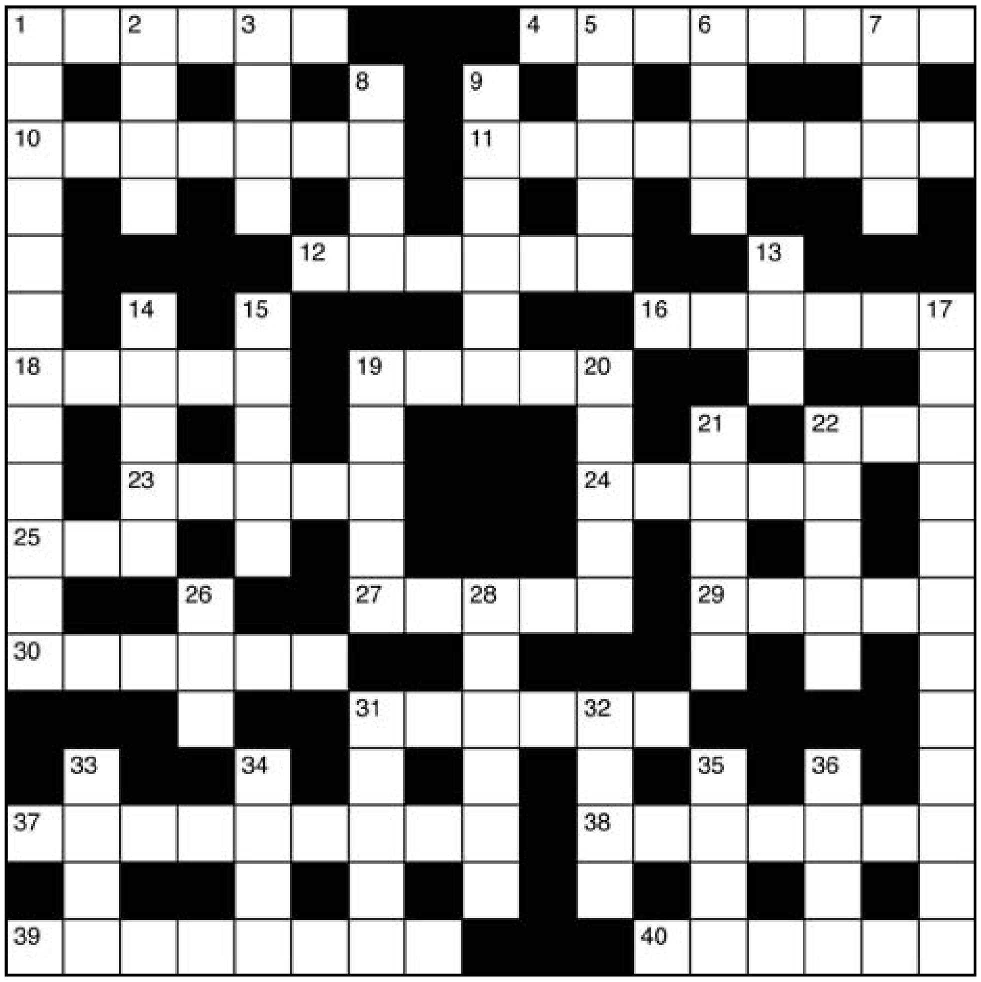
DAILY EXPRESS
Puzzles EXTRA

Welcome to your brilliant Saturday Express eight-page puzzles pullout. We've got plenty here to keep you busy, from your favourite crosswords to brain-teasing sudokus and more. Enjoy!

ENTERTAINMENT CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 AnnaLynne _, Nip/Tuck and 90210 actress (6)
4 Professional tennis player, Novak _ (8)
10 Team Lucy Bronze and Lauren James plays for (7)
11 Actress famed for playing Sue Ellen Ewing (5,4)
12 Star of the Mission Impossible movies, Ving _ (6)
16 Masked Singer UK judge, _ McCall (6)
18 Winner of the third X-Factor series, _ Lewis (5)
19 Dublin-born investigative journalist, _ MacIntyre (5)
22 Noel Gallagher's ex-wife, _ Matthews (3)
23 Former US heavyweight champion, Mike _ (5)
24 Georgian-British singer-songwriter, Katie _ (5)
25 Rock musician and DJ whose real surname is "O'Dowd", _ George (3)
27 _ Sarandon, played Louise to Geena Davis' Thelma (5)
29 Russian fashion model, _ Shayk (5)
30 Rapper whose alter ego is Slim Shady (6)
31 Britain's Got Talent judge, _ Dixon (6)
37 Bend it Like Beckham actress who played a doctor in ER, _ Nagra (9)
38 Former This Morning presenter, _ Schofield (7)
39 TV personality who often co-presents with husband Marvin, _ Humes (8)
40 Ms Electra, American glamour model and celebrity (6)

DOWN

1 Canadian crooner (7,5)
2 Iconic performer born Cherilyn Sarkisian (4)
3 Chat show host, Jonathan _ (4)
5 TV medic, Dr Hilary _ (5)
6 Former Westlife member, _ Egan (4)
7 David Bowie's model wife who hails from Somalia (4)
8 British designer, _ Kidston (4)
9 British actor once married to Uma Thurman, Gary _ (6)
13 _ Myles, Coldwater and The Guest actress (3)
14 Horticulture expert _ Don (5)
15 Actress Palmer or Kensit? (5)
17 One of the BBC's first regular female newsreaders (6,6)
19 Homeland star Claire _ (5)
20 Keith _, celebrity creation of Leigh Francis (5)
21 American financial adviser, _ Hall (5)
22 Lisa _, Elvis Presley's only daughter (5)
26 Dec Donnelly's usual co-host, _ McPartlin (3)
28 Womanizer and Circus singer, Britney _ (6)
31 Funny Irish chap, _ O'Hanlon (5)
32 Danielle _, West End stage performer (4)
33 Dutch jazz singer, _ Emerald (4)
34 Now You See Me: Now You Don't actress, Rosamund _ (4)
35 Natalie Portman's Black Swan co-star, _ Kunis (4)
36 German supermodel, Heidi _ (4)

CODEWORD

The number in each square corresponds to a letter. Work out the words in the grid using the letters provided. Fill in these known letters first, then use skill and judgement to work out the others.

1

20	14	22	24	■	■	22	■	■	21	4	15	8
■	19	■	■	7	22	25	19	5	■	22	■	25
13	10	14	22	21	■	23	■	13	16	13	22	6
■	12	■	■	13	■	14	■	5	■	19	■	25
■	2	21	16	26	12	1	21	1	■	15 C	25 O	19
15	■	■	■	21	■	4	■	■	■	21	■	24
16	14	1	4	22	21	■	4	13	19	18	21	6
12	■	14	■	■	■	11	■	1	■	■	■	1
19	14	23	■	17	14	12	15	9	21	19	1	■
12	■	6	■	14	■	19	■	21	■	■	4	■
15	8	12	19	13	■	3	■	22	12	26	13	16
13	■	4	■	18	22	21	24	1	■	■	12	■
16	12	1	2	■	■	18	■	■	20	25	22	9

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	C										O	

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

2

2	12	14	15	■	■	1	■	■	14	7	10	18
■	22	■	■	18	1	10	20	26	■	19	■	22
26	20	5	16	4	■	2	■	2	15	2	11	4
■	16	■	■	17	■	20	■	18	■	9	■	4
■	22	10	18	12	20	5	16	18	■	2	3	12
21	■	■	■	4	■	12	■	■	■	23	■	20
10 U	7	7	20	12	25	■	8	14	14	21	4	5
15 M	■	2	■	■	■	20	■	10	■	■	■	16
7	10	18	■	18	14	15	4	12	20	15	4	■
19	■	18	■	14	■	7	■	3	■	■	24	■
20	9	20	19	25	■	2	■	20	5	16	14	12
5	■	14	■	2	19	19	14	12	■	■	6	■
16	14	5	4	■	■	2	■	■	13	4	4	23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
									U			

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	M											

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

SAMURAI SUDOKU

Normal sudoku rules apply for all five 9x9 sudokus, but the 9x9 inner sudoku shares four of its 3x3 boxes with those of the outside sudokus.

8	1		6		3							9		6		7			4	
6						5	1									8		5	9	7
			8		7			3				2	7			4			3	
4		5													8					
				2		1		4						3				2	7	8
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5	3	1		4									4	1						8
	7			8		1		3							8		2		4	6

EASY SUDOKU 1

	4		5		1	2	8	
	6						7	9
9		5			2			1
7	5		1				6	
			2	3		1		
	3				6		2	4
			7		9			2
8	2	4		1			9	7
		9	4		8		1	

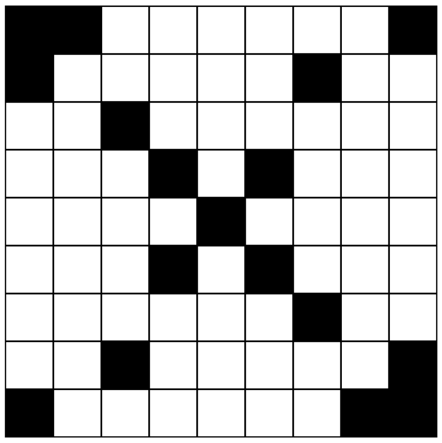
HARD SUDOKU 1

		4	1		7	9		
1			9		4			8
	4	5				2	3	
			5		3			
	1	9				7	6	
5			2		6			9
		7	3		5	6		

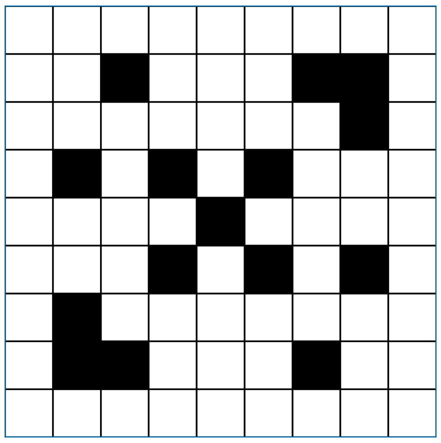
NUMBERFIT 1

NUMBERFIT 2

Use logic to fit the listed numbers below into the corresponding grid.



2 digits: 33 36 44 54 56 73
3 digits: 111 112 115 116 213 222 224 244
4 digits: 1343 2112 2212 3112 3212 5332
5 digits: 11156 56111
6 digits: 233121 313223 314224 315225 316226 513321
8 digits: 37221246 53134343



2 digits: 16 21 61 68
3 digits: 199 347 464 484 494 822 904 913 914 982
4 digits: 1819 1919 4603 4667
5 digits: 34902 38645
7 digits: 5163293 9434123
9 digits: 250937232 288496362 629744062 695418052

ALPHADOKU 1

A 9 x 9 sudoku with the letters R to Z.

V			Z			T		
	X							
Z	R		Y		X			
	U		W				X	
		X		Y	V	Z		
T						S		
Y						V		
							W	
	V	R		U	Z			T

EASY SUDOKU 2

	2		6		4		9	
6		5				4		1
	3		8		1		6	
7		8		1		9		3
			5		8			
4		2		7		8		6
	7		1		3		8	
5		1				3		2
	4		2		5		1	

HARD SUDOKU 2

	8		7	3	5			
7						4		
				8			9	
8					2			5
2		7				6		9
5			1					3
	7			2				
		9						6
			4	6	7		2	

ALPHADOKU 2

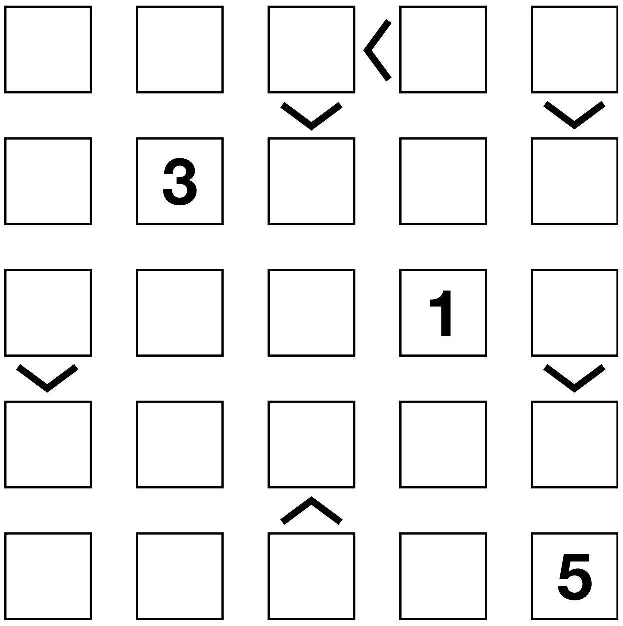
A 9 x 9 sudoku with the letters R to Z.

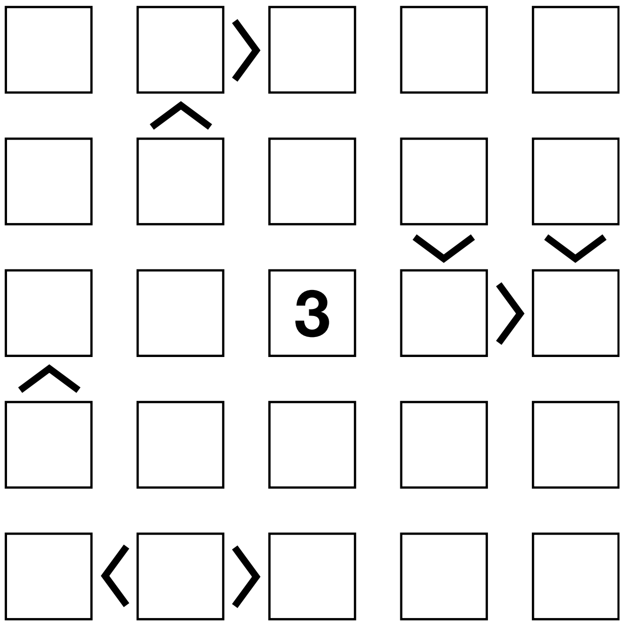
Z						S		
	Y	X		R				Z
	V		U				T	
	X						S	T
Y	T		W					
U			X			Y		V
V	R				W			
	W				T			Y
			Y					

FUTOSHIKI 1

FUTOSHIKI 2

Insert the numbers one to five in each row and each column, making sure that no number is repeated.
The only symbols to guide you are the "greater than" (>) and "less than" (<) signs.

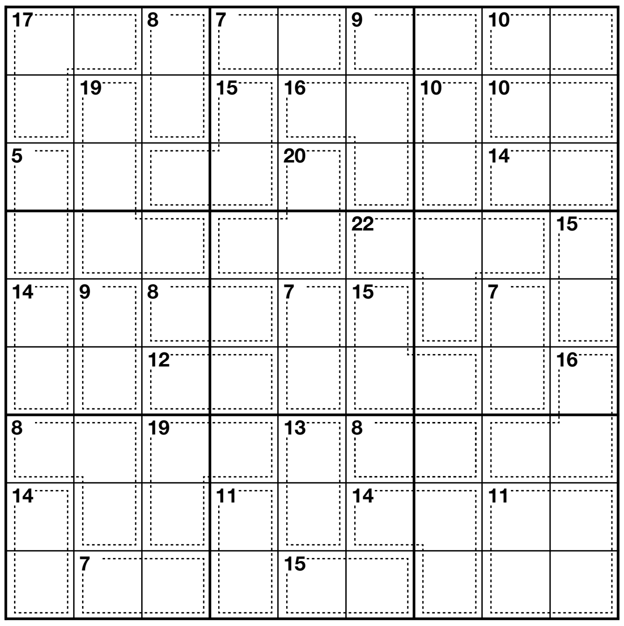




KILLER SUDOKU 1

KILLER SUDOKU 2

Each row and column hold the numbers 1 to 9 and the numbers in the cages must add to the given total.
No number can be repeated in a cage.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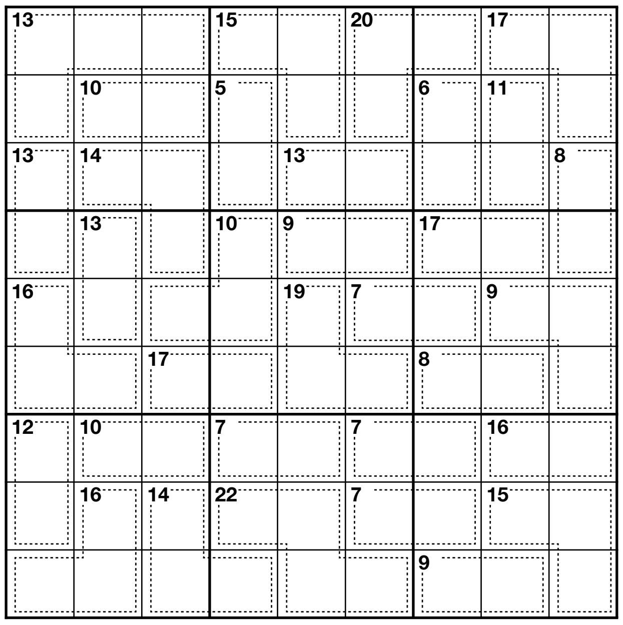
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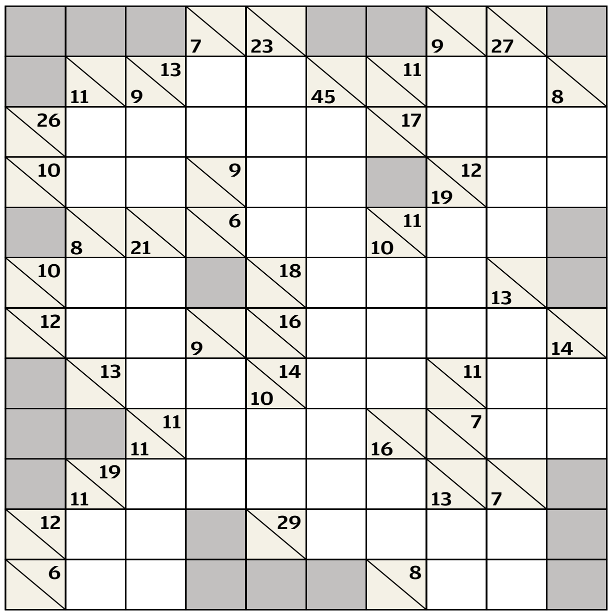
KAKURO 1

KAKURO 2

Fill in each series of blank squares using the numbers 1 to 9. Each series – across and down – must add up to the number in the shaded box at the beginning or top of the series. A number may be repeated in each line but not in a series.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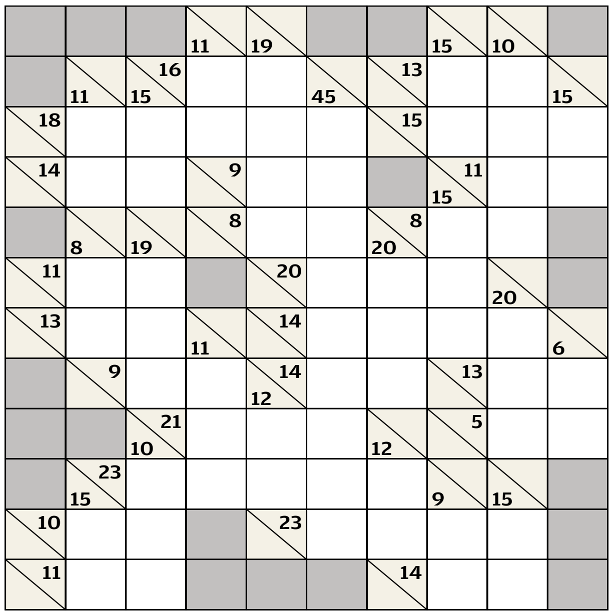
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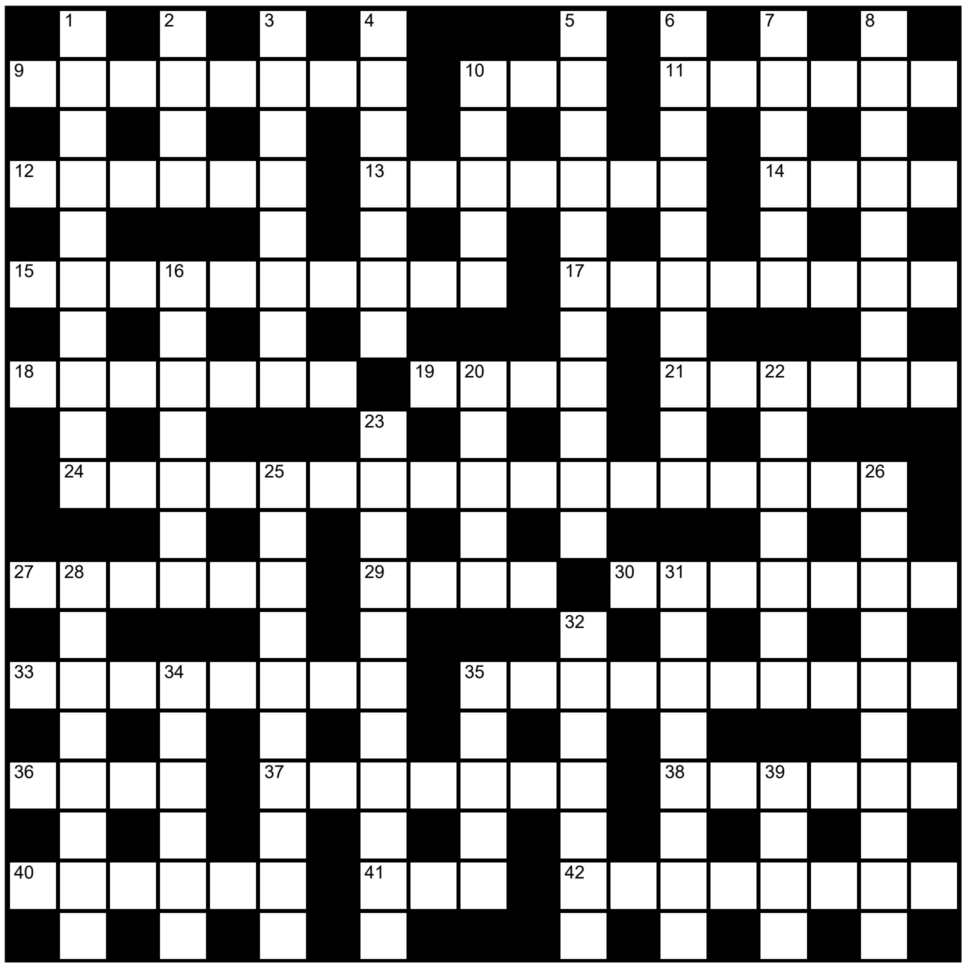
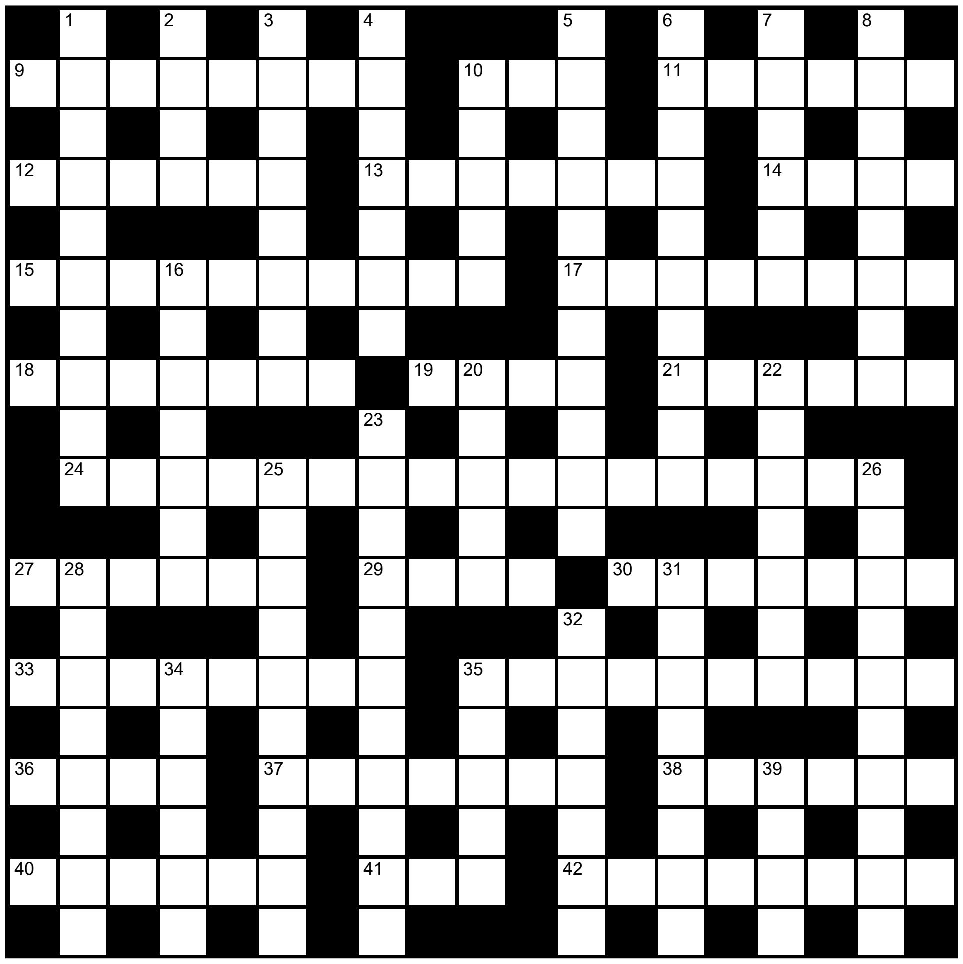
BIG CROSSWORD 1



ACROSS
9 Of the brain (8)
10 Pale (3)
11 Rubber (6)
12 Stationary (6)
13 Insurance payment (7)
14 Courage, informally (4)
15 Skilful (10)
17 Operate (8)
18 Cure-all (7)
19 Box, in training (4)
21 Hurry (6)
24 Grave (5,7,5)
27 German POW camp (6)
29 Woodwind instrument (4)
30 Copy (7)
33 Attributed (8)
35 Frequently countered (10)
36 Pavement edge (4)
37 Stupid (7)
38 Underpass (6)
40 Furniture item (6)
41 That woman (3)
42 Burn feebly (8)

DOWN
1 Spouse, informally (6,4)
2 English county (4)
3 Vehicle (8)
4 Fast sailing ship (7)
5 Apathetic (11)
6 Nautical skill (10)
7 Fly larva (6)
8 Form of glucose (8)
10 Cereal grain (5)
16 Washing cloth (7)
20 Paved area (5)
22 Shade of red (7)
23 Clairvoyance (6,5)
25 Doleful (10)
26 Heartened (10)
28 Inoffensive (8)
31 Type of paint (8)
32 Debate (7)
34 Hydrophobia (6)
35 Speak (5)
39 Invoice (4)

BIG CROSSWORD 2

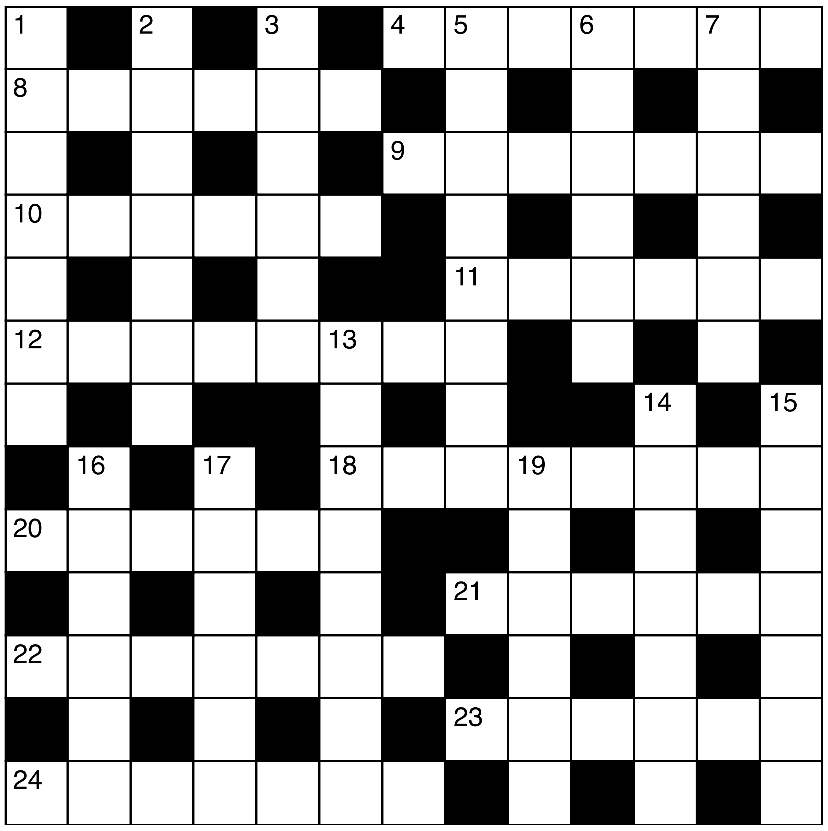


ACROSS
9 Long race (8)
10 Head covering (3)
11 Colour (6)
12 Respiratory disorder (6)
13 Allow (7)
14 Doing word (4)
15 Astounding (10)
17 Impede (8)
18 Tortoise, for example (7)
19 Stylish (4)
21 Naturism (6)
24 Empty threats or objections (7,3,7)
27 Needle (6)
29 Notion (4)
30 Chums (7)
33 German housewife (8)
35 Posh bed (4-6)
36 Skye, for example (4)
37 Refuge (7)
38 Commands (6)
40 Pleasure craft (6)
41 Regret (3)
42 Pasta tubes (8)

DOWN
1 Dentures (5,5)
2 Ready money (4)
3 Shell fragments (8)
4 Wrap up (7)
5 Medical instrument (11)
6 Owing to (2,6,2)
7 Intelligent (6)
8 Sets right (8)
10 Detests (5)
16 Woeful, contemptible (7)
20 Therefore (5)
22 Motorists (7)
23 Farming (11)
25 Teacher (10)
26 Pious (3-7)
28 Hand over (8)
31 Rebuke (8)
32 Noble (7)
34 Playground item (6)
35 Soft sweet (5)
39 Not light (4)

TWO-SPEED CROSSWORD

This two-speed crossword has two sets of clues, but just one grid



CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS
4. It's a strain becoming a skilled craftsman (7)
8. Breaks out, but the rest somehow holds up (6)
9. Not in a position to exercise one's craft? (7)
10. Concerning a spot a long way off (6)
11. Directs transport (6)
12. He favours dictation above all his subjects (8)
18. Clearly not as others are (8)
20. To people, one is a danger (6)
21. Fuss about the French in Spainish city (6)
22. When one can look forward to retirement (7)
23. We arrange the sale of an animal (6)
24. Part of the meal you leave, we hear (7)

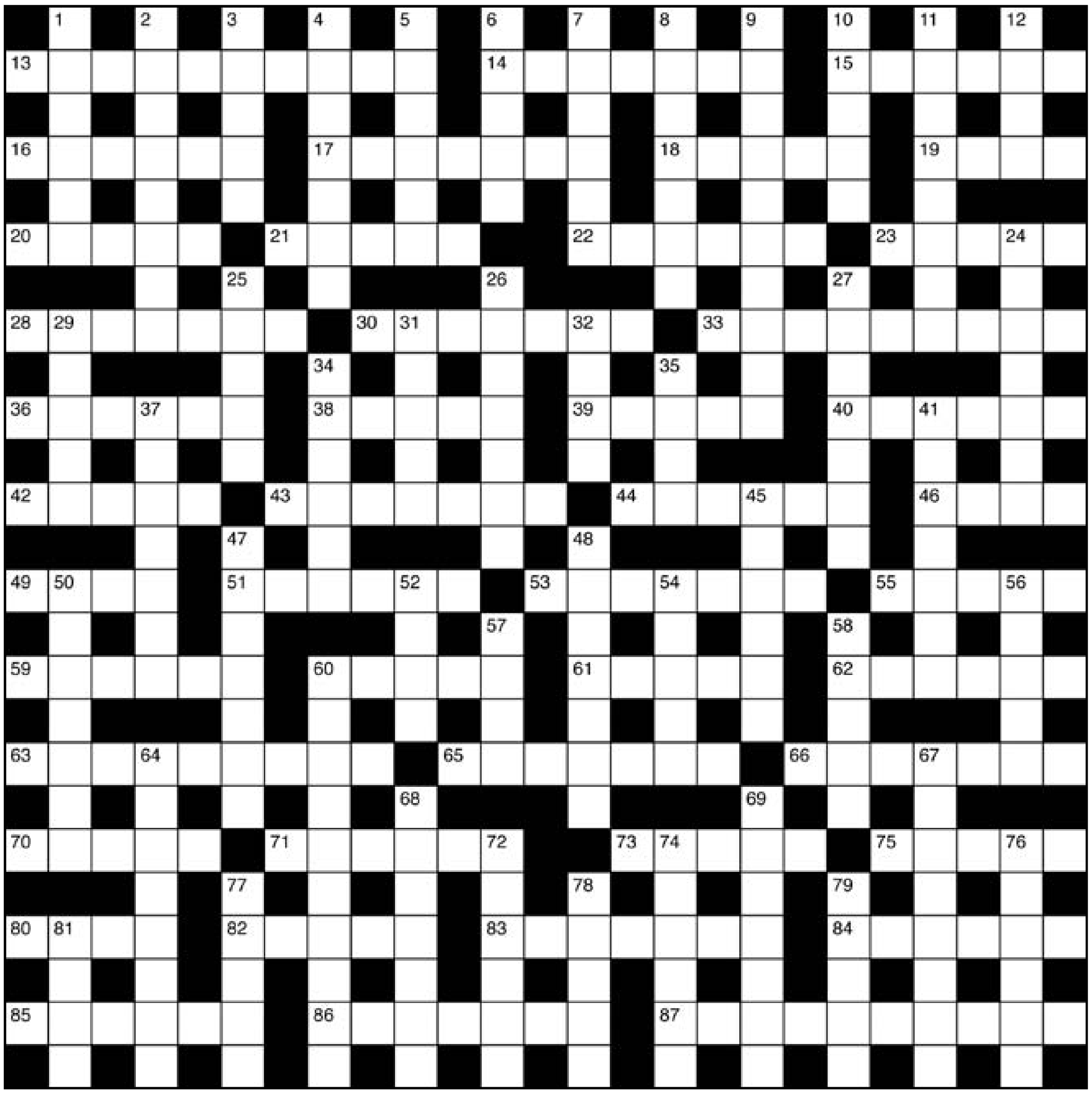
DOWN
1. It's beaten by those who are themselves beaten (7)
2. Tops two thousand in legal actions (7)
3. It acts strangely, causing interference perhaps (6)
5. Crafty contests (8)
6. The meteorologist's line (6)
7. It keeps the sun away from the lawn ingeniously (6)
13. Having paid, he recovers (8)
14. Smouldering anger? (7)
15. Makes slow progress by street car (7)
16. Withdraw a direction to surrender (6)
17. Naturally, it raises awkward points (6)
19. A mason knows how it spreads (6)

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS
4. Craftsman (7)
8. Bursts forth (6)
9. On the bottom (7)
10. Distant (6)
11. Teaches (6)
12. Despot (8)
18. Precise (8)
20. Threat (6)
21. Spanish city (6)
22. Retirement hour (7)
23. Musteline mammal (6)
24. Pudding (7)

DOWN
1. Retire (7)
2. Peaks (7)
3. Stationary (6)
5. Yacht racing contests (8)
6. Weather map line (6)
7. Canvas shelter (6)
13. Recoverer (8)
14. Aromatic substance (7)
15. Ambles (7)
16. Withdraw (6)
17. Spiny plant (6)
19. Garden tool (6)

JUMBO CROSSWORD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ACROSS

13. Tolerably (4,6)
14. Attacks (4,3)
15. Problem (6)
16. Revere (6)
17. Tell (7)
18. Gamut (5)
19. Groups (4)
20. Criticise (5)
21. Tree (5)
22. Humble (6)
23. Breaks (5)
28. Follows (7)
30. Show (7)
33. Exaggerate (9)
36. Make redundant (3,3)
38. Turn out (5)
39. Encourage (5)
40. Duplicated (6)
42. Calm (5)
43. Many (7)
44. Steady (6)
46. Locale (4)
49. Medal (4)
51. Appending (6)
53. Shake (7)
55. Wallpaper adhesive (5)
59. Research (4,2)
60. Support (5)
61. Silly (5)
62. Baskets (6)
63. Unequalled (9)
65. Attending (7)
66. Trial (7)
70. Finished (3,2)
71. Leave (6)
73. Extra (5)
75. Pucker (5)
80. Long (4)
82. List (5)
83. Glass balls (7)
84. Absolves (6)
85. Decline (2,4)
86. Warning (4,3)
87. I believe you (3,3,4)

DOWN

1. Shrink (6)
2. Given (8)
3. Growl (5)
4. Provide (7)
5. Accuse (6)
6. Swindle (5)
7. Flock (6)
8. Companion (7)
9. Watches closely (6,4)
10. Guide (5)
11. Cradle (8)
12. Measures (4)
24. Medical case (7)
25. Fleet (5)
26. Officer (7)
27. Biscuit (7)
29. Organ (5)
31. Only (5)
32. Cut (4)
34. Expand (6)
35. Balance (4)
37. Forced (7)
41. Extract (7)
45. Trouble (6)
47. Gladly (7)
48. Versus (7)
50. Protective garment (7)
52. Close (4)
54. Instruct (5)
56. Claw (5)
57. Rip (4)
58. Hurt (5)
60. Sport (10)
64. Understood (6,2)
67. Gambling game (8)
68. Sailor (7)
69. Appallingly (7)
72. Drum (3-3)
74. Pale (6)
76. Shout (6)
77. Smart (5)
78. Pen (5)
79. Search (5)
81. Horse's gait (4)

NUMBERCRUNCH

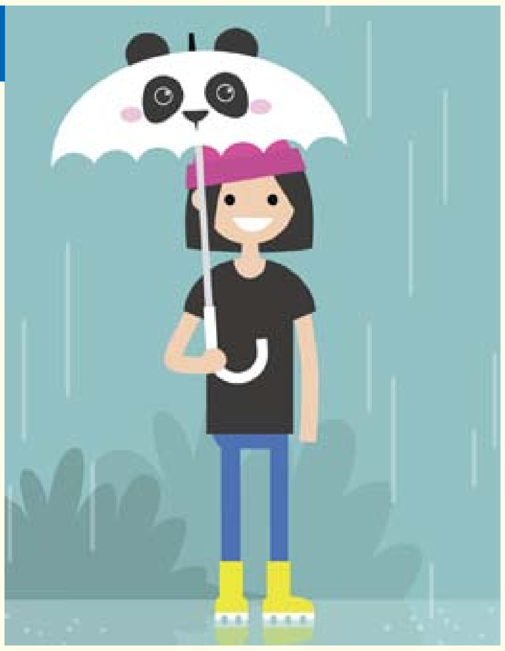
Follow the instructions from left to right, starting with the number given to reach an answer at the end of the row

BEGINNER 25	Take the square root	+7	×6	Reverse the digits	+43	50% of this	-8	2/3 of this	ANSWER
INTERMEDIATE 234	4/9 of this	-92	Square it	+168	5/8 of this	+37	75% of this	+166	ANSWER
ADVANCED 524	-108	8/13 of this	+158	7/9 of this	-33	Take the square root	+327	Increase by 75%	ANSWER

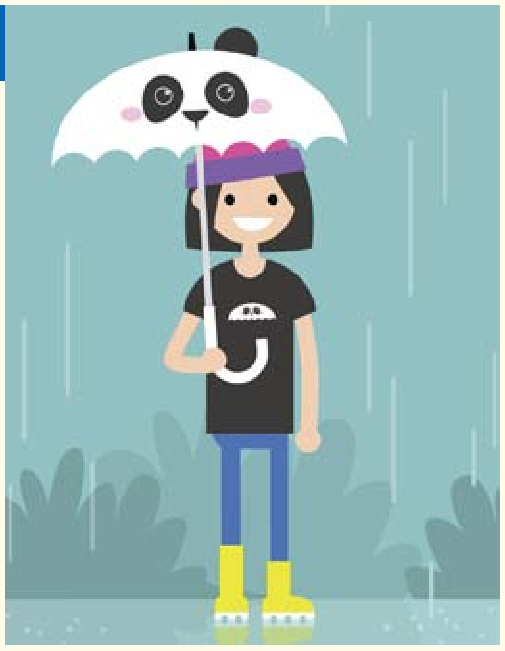
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot the six differences between these two pictures?

A



B



GIANT SUDOKU

Every row, every column and every 5 x 5 box must contain every digit from 1 to 9 and every letter from K to Z.

	V			Y								R	9			3					2	Z		
			T					8		3	X		M	Y	P		5				L	9	4	
		Z		O		1	N			4									M				3	
		Q		S					K	W		O	U	8			9				6	X		
X				8			Q			5		T	V					S				O		
						7			L	T		M				5	8			V		2	N	
	Q	V					6				5	3	Z			S	U		O		M			
			R			Q				P				X		2	Z	L	W				T	5
1	9		8			4	Z	N	X						R		M	3	6		K	Q	7	
		7	S		O	T	P			2	R			4	1				Y	9			X	
		K		6			V		Z	R			X	T						2		4		
Z	7								O		P	W			L	8				5	V			
			Q			W	5	9	N		8	Y			X		3							
4					P	R	X	S	1	9		N				Y		O	T	Z			6	M
	5	9			6		M	Y		O			3		K	7		4	V		R			
7	4				3						V	Z	Y	P				R	8	T	O	1	K	
U				2		S				7			R			K			5	Q	N	M		
	S	5	P										Q	L			1	V	N					
		X				O		U	R		9				2		6	Z		8	P	V		
	K			M				W	V					5	4		O	T	L			R		
		W	L			K	S	V	4							R	X	6		P				
9		8	3	1			Y				T	V	L		Z	U		M		O			W	
	O					9				1	W	8	2	U	N					6			V	
		S	5				2						7	6	W		Q	Y	K		3	T		
	U		4	P	N	Z		3				5		M		O	L	2			Q			

MEDIUM SUDOKU 1

			7		5			
4	3	5	9			8		
	7		3				5	4
		8				7		5
	5			9	3		6	
6		1						
8	1				6		3	
		3			8	5	1	2
	4			3	9			

VERY HARD SUDOKU 1

				1				3
	3		8				4	
		9	3	2				6
5					1	9		
		7				5		
		8	7					1
2				7	3	8		
	4				8		1	
7				6				

CROSS OUT 1

CROSS OUT 2

Cross out one of the two letters in each divided square to reveal a completed crossword grid.

S / D	Y / E	P / S	O / L	S / T
A / E		M / A		A / O
V / R	I / O	V / N	Y / E	R / L
X / I		D / E		O / E
S / L	E / A	S / A	R / Z	R / N

S / A	B / T	A / O	G / U	T / S
R / X		R / T		W / E
T / R	O / Y	O / B	I / T	S / N
O / L		I / M		T / B
C / W	A / U	S / T	E / C	H / R

IMPOSSUDOKU 1

		8				1		
			5		7			
1			6		8			2
7			1		2			6
	1			6			9	
4			8		3			1
8			2		6			5
			3		4			
		2				4		

MEDIUM SUDOKU 2

	6	4	2			3		1
		1		4	8			
	9		5	6				
	3				4	1		6
		7		1		5		
1		9					8	
				8	3			5
	8		1	7		6		
2					6	8	4	

VERY HARD SUDOKU 2

1				5				8
	7				8		5	
				6			7	
		8	7			6		
2	1						3	7
		7		1	9	2		
	4			2				
	3						4	
8				4				9

IMPOSSUDOKU 2

	5			2	7			
2	1					7		
				1		6	4	
					3			6
3		5				4		9
6			8					
	8	3		4				
		1					7	8
			1	5			6	

PATHFINDER 1

PATHFINDER 2

From the top corner, make a path of words linked to the theme. The trail goes through each letter once but never diagonally.

Prehistoric sites UK and Ireland

A	R	Y	S	T	L	E	N	B	U	R	I	N	N	E
V	U	C	A	R	B	R	O	T	R	Y	C	G	A	B
E	B	A	T	A	A	I	G	C	N	E	R	S	D	U
O	T	N	S	E	R	C	G	H	A	S	W	G	Y	R
N	E	W	S	K	A	A	L	C	H	S	E	A	F	L
D	R	E	T	S	I	H	L	A	N	I	L	R	G	A
N	E	N	N	L	L	Y	B	L	N	A	L	C	F	E
G	H	S	E	R	O	R	U	I	S	F	I	E	R	N
E	E	S	S	E	L	L	G	H	R	U	E	N	T	G
W	N	O	T	G	N	R	I	T	A	M	P	M	I	R
E	S	T	U	F	A	R	G	S	S	D	L	E	R	A
K	T	E	I	F	O	N	W	T	O	S	O	S	G	V
E	N	N	N	G	T	C	E	N	N	E	P	S	M	E
G	N	D	O	E	L	A	W	E	E	A	O	U	I	S
E	E	H	O	W	T	S	O	H	S	M	D	N	R	G

Leonardo DiCaprio films

T	O	Y	H	A	T	A	T	A	S	H	E	B	E	A
H	B	S	W	E	S	E	I	M	K	T	O	S	G	C
I	S	L	I	F	E	B	N	N	I	E	F	N	N	H
T	E	K	G	T	R	L	G	O	R	H	W	E	A	G
B	A	S	R	A	P	I	G	I	N	T	Y	U	C	A
L	L	A	B	E	E	M	A	N	K	R	O	O	T	N
D	R	I	E	H	T	E	H	T	C	A	F	Y	H	E
I	A	M	S	I	N	O	O	M	C	T	I	I	V	A
S	T	A	R	V	S	R	H	C	H	M	E	A	L	O
B	A	G	E	R	G	E	A	N	U	J	D	T	B	O
Y	T	T	A	L	L	H	I	N	O	A	N	O	R	D
E	H	F	O	A	S	T	D	E	G	N	O	I	I	D
W	O	L	F	W	T	R	N	D	I	N	P	T	A	M
N	A	V	E	H	T	E	A	I	R	C	E	H	S	O
T	N	E	R	E	T	E	L	S	E	T	T	U	D	N

WORDSEARCH 1

WORDSEARCH 2

Find 13 words in the left and 13 words in the right grid.

Airlines

M	O	N	A	R	C	H	M	R	A
W	T	H	S	G	I	R	A	V	E
A	O	U	N	R	P	F	N	S	R
T	L	N	A	Y	M	A	A	A	L
E	F	I	H	A	Y	I	P	T	I
J	O	I	T	N	L	R	Z	N	N
Y	R	Z	F	A	O	E	T	A	G
S	E	F	U	I	L	B	L	Q	U
A	A	M	L	R	D	I	G	A	S
E	D	R	H	H	T	B	A	U	L

Bible figures

M	X	H	R	Y	F	B	U	S	N
A	Z	D	B	K	O	Q	O	M	H
T	H	U	A	C	G	L	J	X	O
T	S	T	A	V	O	P	O	G	J
H	U	J	A	M	I	Y	S	X	J
E	J	T	O	I	K	D	H	M	O
W	B	N	Y	E	L	R	U	E	S
S	E	S	O	M	K	O	A	H	E
L	E	I	N	A	D	U	G	M	P
P	T	F	M	R	H	B	L	P	H

ARROWWORD 1

Unstable Speciality food shop	▼	Mature	▼	Small horse	▼	Block of paper	▼
▶				Be in debt	▶		
Highest point		Metal fastener Chart	▶			Leafless plant	
▶		▼		Root vegetable Vice	▶	▼	
Sharp taste Fruit seed	▶			▼	Mahershala _, Moonlight actor		Finish
▶			Tirade	▶	▼		▼
Not many		Northern Italian city	▶				
▶			Garden bird, _ wagtail	▶			

ARROWWORD 2

Formerly Fragrant flower	▼	Lubricant Coupon	▼	Whirlpool French city	▼	Metal	▼
▶		▼		▼			
Firm	▶					Mexican plant	
Secret hoard	Small particle		Shade of blue Belonging to that girl	▶		▼	
▶	▼		▼		Poorly lit		_ Nevis, Scottish mountain
Definite article Forceful	▶			Mark with paint	▶ ▼		▼
▶							
Married woman	▶			Adult males	▶		

SOLUTIONS

PAGE ONE

ENTERTAINMENT CROSSWORD

Across:1 McCord; 4 Djokovic; 10 Chelsea; 11 Linda Gray; 12 Rhames; 16 Davina; 18 Leona; 19 Donal; 22 Meg; 23 Tyson; 24 Melua; 25 Boy; 27 Susan; 29 Irina; 30 Eminem; 31 Alesha; 37 Parminder; 38 Phillip; 39 Rochelle; 40 Carmen.
Down: 1 Michael Buble; 2 Cher; 3 Ross; 5 Jones; 6 Kian; 7 Iman; 8 Cath; 9 Oldman; 13 Eve; 14 Monty; 15 Patsy; 17 Angela Rippon; 19 Danes; 20 Lemon; 21 Alvin; 22 Marie; 26 Ant; 28 Spears; 31 Ardal; 32 Hope; 33 Caro; 34 Pike; 35 Mila; 36 Klum.

CODEWORD

1

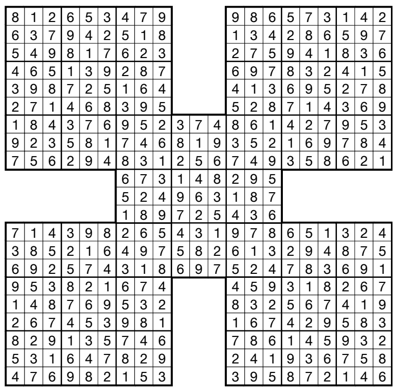
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S	P	X	T	G	M	W	H	K	Z	J	I	A
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
U	C	L	Q	D	N	F	E	R	B	Y	O	V

2

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Q	A	F	E	N	K	P	W	C	U	Z	T	J
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
O	M	G	X	S	L	I	D	H	R	V	Y	B

PAGES TWO AND THREE:

SAMURAI SUDOKU



EASY SUDOKU

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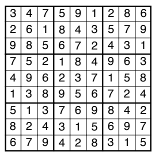
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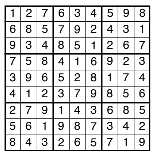

FUTOSHIKI

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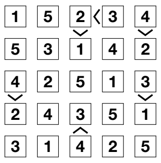
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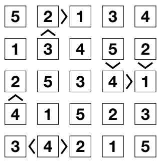

NUMBERFIT

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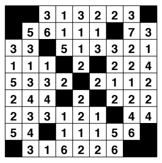
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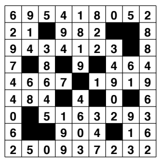

KAKURO

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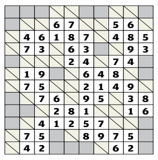

HARD SUDOKU

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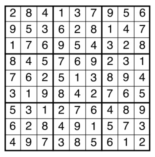
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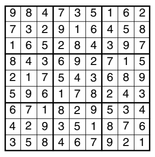

KILLER SUDOKU

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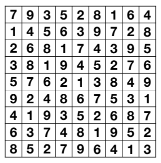
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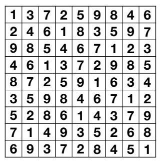

ALPHADOKU

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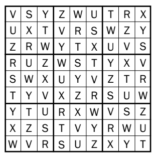
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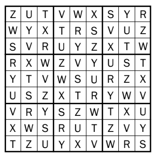

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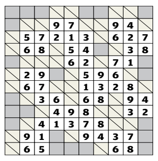


PAGES FOUR AND FIVE:

BIG CROSSWORD 1

Across: 9 Cerebral, 10 Wan, 11 Eraser, 12 Static, 13 Premium, 14 Guts, 15 Proficient, 17 Function, 18 Panacea, 19 Spar, 21 Hasten, 24 Final resting place, 27 Stalag, 29 Oboe, 30 Replica, 33 Ascribed, 35 Ubiquitous, 36 Kerb, 37 Idiotic, 38 Subway, 40 Bureau, 41 Her, 42 Smoulder.
Down: 1 Better half, 2 Kent, 3 Tricycle, 4 Clipper, 5 Indifferent, 6 Seamanship, 7 Maggot, 8 Dextrose, 10 Wheat, 16 Flannel, 20 Patio, 22 Scarlet, 23 Second sight, 25 Lugubrious, 26 Encouraged, 28 Tasteful, 31 Emulsion, 32 Discuss, 34 Rabies, 35 Utter, 39 Bill.

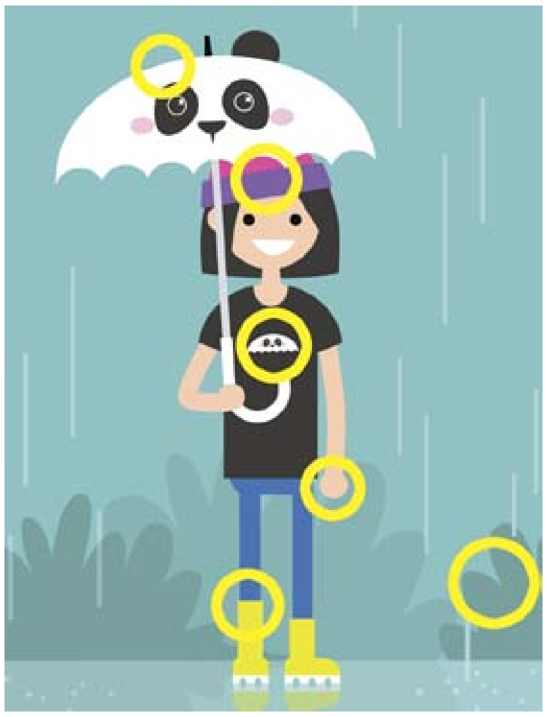
BIG CROSSWORD 2

Across: 9 Marathon, 10 Hat, 11 Yellow, 12 Asthma, 13 Entitle, 14 Verb, 15 Stupendous, 17 Obstruct, 18 Reptile, 19 Chic, 21 Nudism, 24 Huffing and puffing, 27 Stylus, 29 Idea, 30 Friends, 33 Hausfrau, 35 Four-poster, 36 Isle, 37 Citadel, 38 Orders, 40 Pedalo, 41 Rue, 42 Macaroni.
Down: 1 False teeth, 2 Cash, 3 Shrapnel, 4 Envelop, 5 Stethoscope, 6 By reason of, 7 Clever, 8 Corrects, 10 Hates, 16 Pitiful, 20 Hence, 22 Drivers, 23 Agriculture, 25 Instructor, 26 God-fearing, 28 Transfer, 31 Reproach, 32 Sublime, 34 Seesaw, 35 Fudge, 39 Dark.

JUMBO CROSSWORD

Across: 13 Well enough; 14 Hits out; 15 Teaser; 16 Honour; 17 Narrate; 18 Range; 19 Sets; 20 Slate; 21 Aspen; 22 Modest; 23 Snaps; 28 Shadows; 30 Pageant; 33 Overstate; 36 Lay off; 38 Prove; 39 Cheer; 40 Copied; 42 Still; 43 Several; 44 Stable; 46 Site; 49 Gong; 51 Adding; 53 Agitate; 55 Paste; 59 Read up; 60 Brace; 61 Inane; 62 Creels; 63 Matchless; 65 Present; 66 Hearing; 70 All up; 71 Depart; 73 Spare; 75 Purse; 80 Itch; 82 Table; 83 Marbles; 84 Clears; 85 Go down; 86 Look out; 87 I'll buy that.
Down: 1 Recoil; 2 Allotted; 3 Snarl; 4 Furnish; 5 Charge; 6 Cheat; 7 Stream; 8 Comrade; 9 Stands over; 10 Steer; 11 Bassinet; 12 Feet; 24 Patient; 25 Swift; 26 General; 27 Cracker; 29 Heart; 31 Alone; 32 Nick; 34 Spread; 35 Rest; 37 Obliged; 41 Passage; 45 Bother; 47 Happily; 48 Against; 50 Overall; 52 Near; 54 Train; 56 Talon; 57 Tear; 58 Ached; 60 Basketball; 64 Caught on; 67 Roulette; 68 Matelot; 69 Grossly; 72 Tom-tom; 74 Pallid; 76 Scream; 77 Sting; 78 Write; 79 Scour; 81 Trot.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE



TWO-SPEED

Across: 4 Artisan; 8 Erupts; 9 Aground; 10 Remote; 11 Trains; 12 Autocrat; 18 Distinct; 20 Menace; 21 Toledo; 22 Bedtime; 23 Weasel; 24 Dessert.
Down: 1 Retreat; 2 Summits; 3 Static; 5 Regattas; 6 Isobar; 7 Awning; 13 Redeemer; 14 Incense; 15 Strolls; 16 Secede; 17 Cactus; 19 Trowel.

NUMBERCRUNCH

Beginner 18
Intermediate 340
Advanced 602

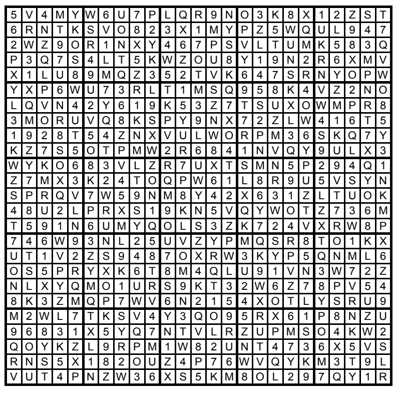
PAGES SIX AND SEVEN:

PATHFINDER

1 Avebury, Castlerigg, Callanish, Chanctonbury Ring, Creswell Crags, Danebury, Flag Fen, Grime's Graves, Grimspound, Maeshowe, Newgrange, Rollright Stones, Old Sarum, Pentre Ifan, Silbury Hill, Skara Brae, Stanton Drew, Stenness, Stonehenge, West Kennet, Uffington Castle, Woodhenge.

2 This Boy's Life, What's Eating Gilbert Grape, The Basketball Diaries, Marvin's Room, The Man in the Iron Mask, The Beach, Gangs of New York, Catch Me If You Can, The Aviator, Blood Diamond, Shutter Island, Inception, Django Unchained, The Great Gatsby, The Wolf of Wall Street, The Revenant.

GIANT SUDOKU



MEDIUM SUDOKU

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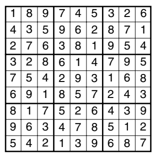
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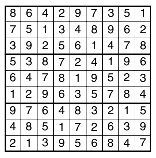

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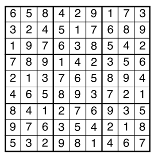
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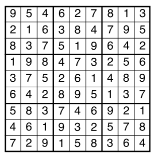

ARROWWORD

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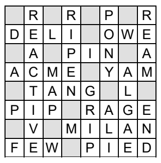
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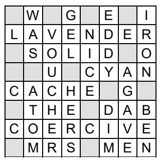

VERY HARD SUDOKU

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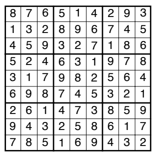
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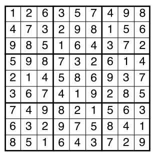

CROSS OUT

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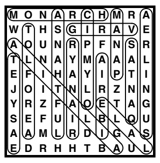
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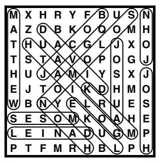

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YOUR FOOTBALL WEEKEND STARTS HERE

BARRY SHEEN
Ezri Konsa tries in vain to keep out the Everton striker's audacious chip

Barry says Villa Park stunner 'best of my career' but vows plenty more to come

BRIGHTON V EVERTON
PREMIER LEAGUE KICK-OFF 3PM

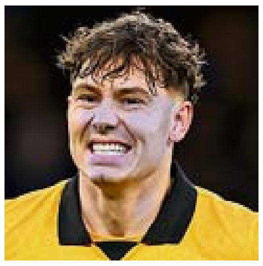
THE WORLDIE IS NOT ENOUGH

PAGES 2-3

GLASNER FEARS NIGHTMARE SCENARIO AT SELL-FIRST PARK - P5

WOLVES v BOURNEMOUTH

Premier League: KO 3pm



JOR STILL NEEDED SAYS ROB

ROB EDWARDS confirmed Jorgen Strand Larsen will be in Wolves' squad for today's visit of Bournemouth – despite the forward being linked with a move away from Molineux.

Strand Larsen (above) has been attracting interest from Crystal Palace, although it is understood to have cooled, while Leeds are also keen.

But Edwards will include the Norwegian striker against the Cherries.

"It's pretty clear, he's trained and he will be part of the squad," said Edwards.

"He's trained really well, so that's as much as I can say on it."

Pressed on whether Palace had backed away from any deal, Edwards added: "That's something for them. Obviously I'm working for Wolves, so I don't know."

Midfielder Jean-Ricner Bellegarde is available, having been sidelined since December 8 with a hamstring injury, but defender Ladislav Krejci is doubtful because he has the flu.

Bournemouth head coach Andoni Iraola feels the club need to be "careful" with new signing Rayan (left) as he contemplates handing the Brazilian winger a swift Premier League debut.

Rayan, 19, joined the Cherries this week on a five-and-a-half-year contract after scoring 20 goals in 57 appearances for Vasco da Gama.

Iraola, who also brought in Greek goalkeeper Christos Mandas, said of the Brazilian: "We have to be careful with him. He is 19, he is going to be making a big jump, a big change, to a different country and I want him to be confident."

SUNDERLAND v BURNLEY

Premier League: Monday, 8pm, Sky Sports

GRANIT KO IS HITTING CATS HARD

SUNDERLAND boss Regis Le Bris will have to cope without Granit Xhaka for up to three weeks.

The midfielder (above) was absent for the Black Cats' defeat to West Ham last weekend due to an ankle problem and will miss Monday night's clash against Burnley.

Le Bris said: "He's doing well. He will have another assessment in around one week and from that point we'll see where he is to define the next stage of his rehabilitation. So it should take probably three more weeks."

The Swiss star arrived on Wearside in the summer and was swiftly appointed captain, and he has proved to be influential both on and off the pitch.

Le Bris added: "I think we can't replace Granit, so we have to build a new set-up, a new leadership as well.

"It takes time, but at the same time Granit wants to create the conditions for new leaders, so it's a good period for that.

"We might struggle a bit, which is normal in the Premier League."

Manager Scott Parker (inset) has promised Burnley will keep working right up to Monday's 7pm transfer deadline, despite kicking off just an hour later.

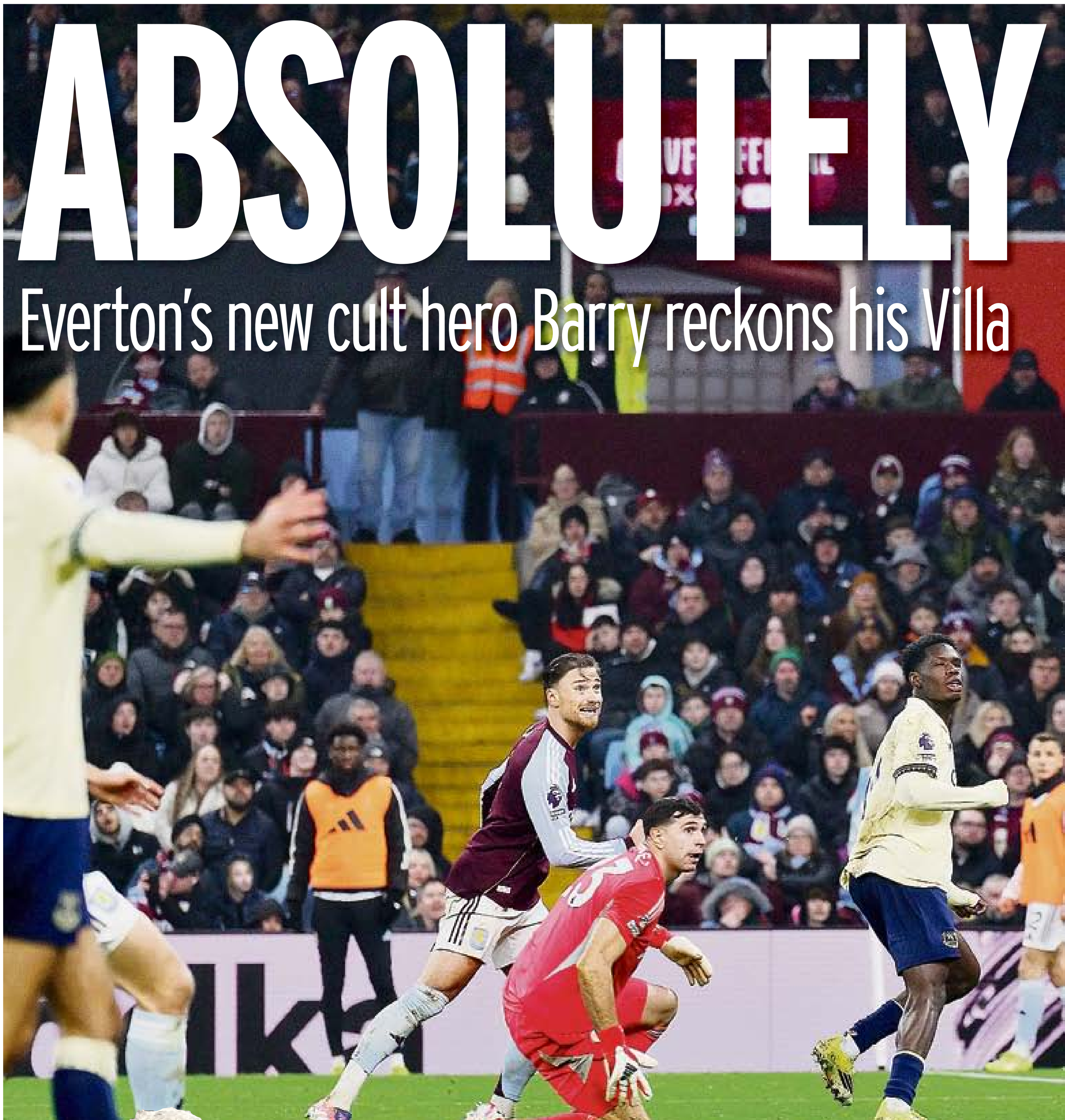
The Clarets made their first signing of the window on Wednesday when James Ward-Prowse joined on loan from West Ham for the rest of the season.

Parker said: "Hopefully if things are in, they're probably going to be landing a bit before that.

"I'll be focused on the game, so I'll be out of reach, but I'd like to think if there was anything we'd have it in place by then or certainly have an idea of where we're going."

ABSOLUTELY

Everton's new cult hero Barry reckons his Villa



BRIGHTON v EVERTON

Premier League: KO 3pm

BY **JOE THOMAS**

THIERNO BARRY ranks his audacious chip against Aston Villa earlier this month as the best goal he has ever scored.

That should come as no surprise – it had everything. It was an instinctive, inch-perfect chip over a World Cup-winning goalkeeper that inspired a desperate goal-line scramble from Ezri Konsa.

It gave Everton victory and just reward for a battling, hard-fought display at a Premier League title challenger.

It came under the lights of one of English football's iconic stadiums, just as the nation tuned in for Sky Sports' weekend showcase event.

It was also Barry's first true match winner for his new club, where he had struggled for six months before hitting a rich vein of form.

"It was clearly a very good goal," the 23-year-old said. "I think it's the best goal of my little career and I hope to score a goal like this again."

After the match, Barry joined his team-mates as they celebrated with a jubilant away end.

As he stood in his tracksuit, taking it all in, those supporters burst into a rendition of the song they have dedicated to him.

It was a full-circle moment for Barry. Two months earlier the Everton fanbase had lifted him from his knees as his goal drought continued.

His difficult start at the club sunk to rock bottom when he missed from close range at Sunderland days earlier.

Yet, as he walked off the pitch during Everton's home game with Fulham less than a week later, he was met with a raucous reception.

The Blues faithful, as boss David Moyes (left) had done by keeping him in his starting line-up, showed their trust.

The France youth international said: "Sometimes it is not about a goal, but the sentiment.

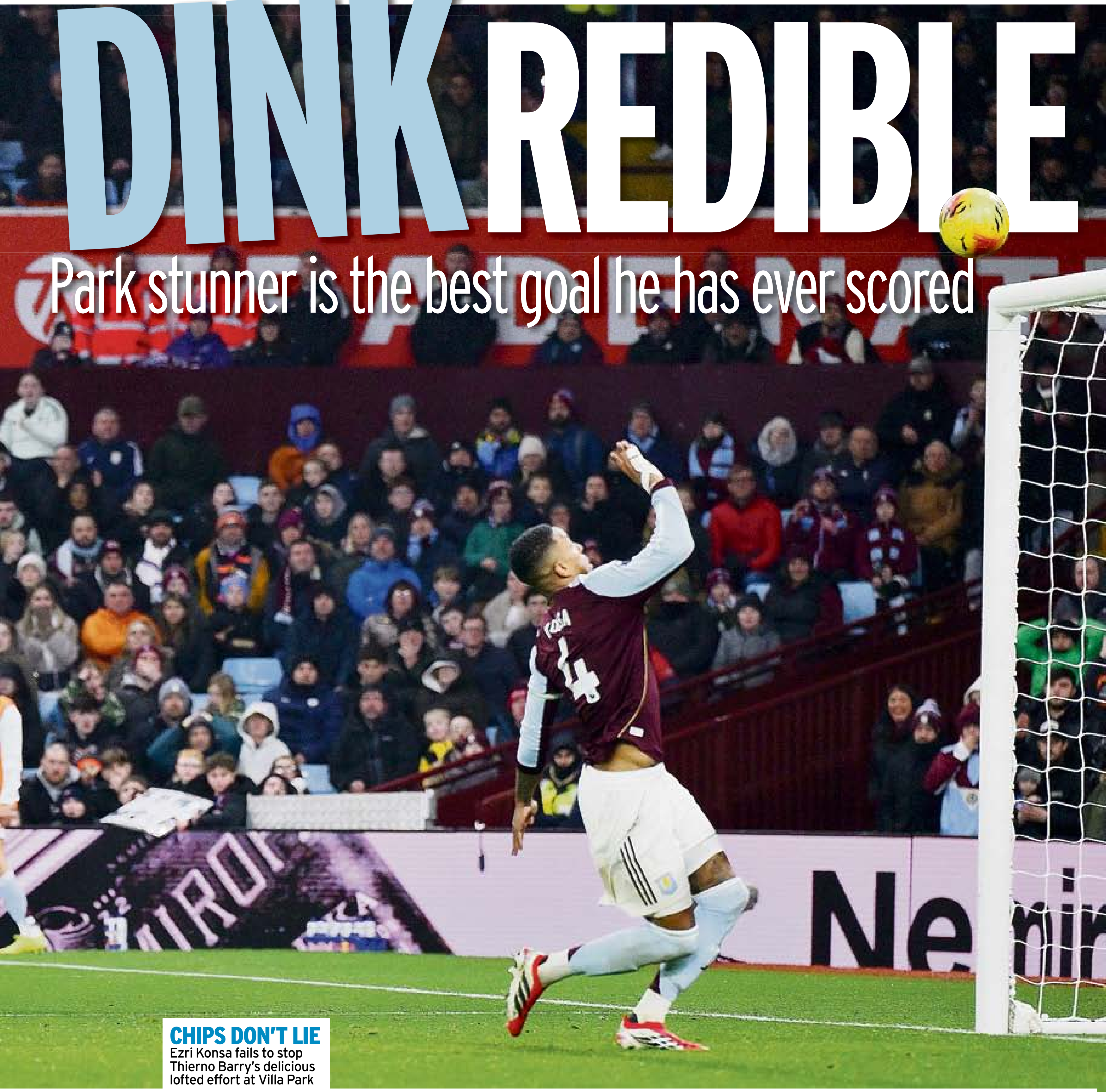
"After the game, my mum called me and said, 'You see, the people love you. You need to give the love back'. Good things come to those who wait."

That has been true in his case.

He sought to take positives

DINKREDIBLE

Park stunner is the best goal he has ever scored



CHIPS DON'T LIE
Ezri Konsa fails to stop Thierno Barry's delicious lofted effort at Villa Park

from his tough night at the Stadium of Light, telling himself that being in a position to score a goal represented progress.

His wait for a first goal finally ended last month against Nottingham Forest, when he slotted in the second in a 3-0 win at Hill Dickinson Stadium.

"I think it was the first goal of my life that gave me a lot of emotions," added Barry. "I talked about this goal after with Ili [Ndiaye] and he said when he scores he feels goosebumps.

"I can say that, because the songs in the stadium were amazing. I loved this moment."

More have followed, with Barry producing another fine finish to help the Toffees rescue a point at home to Leeds last Monday.

He is not afraid to admit it has taken him time to adapt to English football – nor that he is still very much in the learning phase.

Crucial to him in those early months was the support of Moyes.

"I remember when I talked with him and said I am not happy about my situation because I didn't play," said Barry.

"He told me, 'I have seen a lot of young players come here who play good for the first two or three months and then do nothing. I want you to give me your confidence and after we can talk again'."

That Barry is taking time to adapt should come as little shock. Not only is he a young player in a new league and a new country, but he is, to an extent, in a new role.

It was only at his last club, Villarreal, that he started to play as an out-and-out forward. Before then, with Swiss club Basel and the Belgian outfit Beveren, he typically operated from the left wing.

He scored goals at all of those clubs, hence only spending a year at each before eventually stepping up to Everton with a £27m move in the summer.

His route to stardom has not been straightforward – he did not rise through an academy and instead spent his youth in amateur football.

He suffered rejection, too, first through a trial at French side Clermont and then, as an 18-year-old, in Scotland when he was turned down by Hamilton Academical.

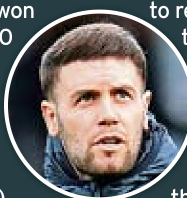
Despite those setbacks, he never stopped believing.

"I always trusted in this because I could just play football," he added. "I didn't have a Plan B. I did it the long way – but a good long way."

FUTURE LOOKING FAB

BRIGHTON manager Fabian Hurzeler urged his side to start turning recent good performances into wins when they host Everton this afternoon.

The Seagulls have won just one of their last 10 Premier League games and pockets of unrest are starting to appear at the Amex Stadium.



But Hurzeler (inset) stressed there was no need to panic and remains convinced his squad could soon start moving in the right direction up the top-flight table.

The German said: "The recent performances were good. There's a lot of frustration about the results.

"We have tried to channel the frustration during the week.

"We all know that we want to reach our goals and for that we need wins.

"We need to stick together and tomorrow (against Everton) is a great opportunity to do that.

"We are all positive because we see that we are close.

"We see that we are there. We just have to manage the key situations of the game better.

"We just have to manage these key moments better."

ODDS AND NODS

William HILL

BY **LEE PHELPS**

IT'S GOLD Weekend at William Hill, which means more offers on the app and in our shops.

After giving away over £1.25m in prize money for Final One Standing so far this season, we're starting a new £50k jackpot at 3pm today.

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Leeds versus Arsenal feels like a Sunday afternoon game, but we're blessed with a 3pm kick-off.

When Viktor Gyokeres (below) scored twice as the Gunners won the reverse fixture 5-0 in August, we all thought their fates were obvious, but Daniel Farke's side have rallied against the relegation predictions and Elland Road has lived up to its fortress status.

I see Leeds scoring against the title favourites, who have wobbled recently, conceding 40 per cent of their season's goals in the last six matches. So I'll go for a both-teams-to-score draw at 9-2.

The Toon Army haven't seen a league win at Anfield since 1994 and Newcastle have been ordinary on the road this season, while, Qarabag apart, Arne Slot's men are struggling to find a win.

The score draw is just under 4-1 as I write this.

In the other games, I fancy Everton to go to Brighton and win, a comfortable Chelsea home three points against West Ham and Wolves against Bournemouth to feature over 3.5 goals.

Good luck and enjoy your football.

ADVERTORIAL

WE CAN GIVE RELEGATION THE SLIP

'Greased lightning' Traore ready to haul Hammers to safety

CHELSEA v WEST HAM

Premier League: KO 5.30pm

BY **NEIL McLEMAN**

ADAMA TRAORE and his baby oil can help West Ham slide out of the relegation zone, says Nuno Espirito Santo.

And the Hammers boss joked he is ready to order extra oil for Jarrod Bowen and Crysensio Summerville to help them also give defenders the slip.

The powerful winger joined West Ham from Fulham this week and is set to make his debut at Chelsea today.

Nuno bought Traore for Wolves for £18million in 2018 – and saw up close his pre-match routine of applying baby oil to his arms before matches.

The ritual started to protect his shoulder after he dislocated it four times. But it also stops defenders getting to grips with him as one of the fastest players in the Premier League.

He really is greased lightning – and 18th-placed West Ham now need him to strike in the final 15 matches of the season without the departed Lucas Paqueta.

Nuno said: "He does it to stop people from holding him. It makes sense.

"I think it came from an injury that he had, someone who held him really bad. Someone pushed him and pulled him really hard and dislocated his shoulder.

"I'm not quite sure, but I think it came from a physio, and it made a lot of sense."

West Ham have won their last two Premier League games, but are still five points from safety.

Asked if they will be ordering more baby oil for Traore, the Irons manager smiled: "Yeah, if that stops people from holding, maybe we have to give some to Jarrod and to Crysencio!"

Traore, 30, made just two Premier League starts for Fulham this season, but will add a much-needed X factor after the departure of playmaker Paqueta.

"I've worked with him for many years, and I know him well," Nuno said. "He's unique – there aren't many players with his ability one-on-one, or with his pace.

"He's going to give us many things that we need. He possesses great threat, and he has great energy, not only on the pitch, but in the dressing room and at the training ground, too. He's a special person to have around. We need good performances, we need results and Adama is here to help."

Nuno also hopes Traore – his fourth signing of the January window – will help free up his fellow forwards, especially Bowen.

The England striker is trying to earn a place in the World Cup squad as well as avoid relegation.

"The work that he's putting in every minute of the game is extraordinary," said Nuno.

"We are aware that he has his personal objective, to go to the World Cup, which must happen because he's a fantastic player. Thomas Tuchel cannot afford not to have him around."

HE'S A QUICK FIX

New signing Traore shows off his raw pace during his Wolves days under Nuno

'NO TIME TO TAKE A NAP'

BY **JAKE STOKES**

LIAM ROSENIOR says Chelsea's clash against West Ham is the "biggest game of the season".

Rosenior has won five of his first six games in charge and is eager to build on Wednesday's win over Napoli in the Champions League.

The Blues boss believes the real test of his players' mentality will be at Stamford Bridge this afternoon.

"West Ham is the biggest game of the season, it's very simple," said Rosenior. "I am going to find out so much.

"If you want to be a consistent winning team, these are the games where you have to step forward and not be complacent.

"After an away win in Italy, to come back three days later, I want to see the consistency levels of the group.

"That's why this is a massive marker of where we're really at."

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HARD TO GET DEALS DONE SAYS DYCHE

BY **SARAH CLAPSON**

NOTTINGHAM FOREST remain active in the transfer market – but Sean Dyche is expecting a "difficult" few days until the window shuts.

Napoli loanee Lorenzo Lucca is the Reds' only signing this month.

However, further incomings – and outgoings – are on the cards before Monday's 7pm cut-off.

Dyche has reiterated the challenges Forest face in trying to do business in the winter window, though remains in no doubt that owner Evangelos Marinakis is prepared to show his backing by funding new additions.

Asked if he expects a busy few days on the transfer front, Dyche said: "We'll see. I've said all along, the owner has made it clear he will support the club. It depends on what is available.

"People could possibly go out, but more likely we are looking for people to come in. It is not easy, I have said that all along – and that's not a comment I throw around lightly.

"These transfer windows are really difficult, and January is probably the most difficult of all.

"But we are active in certain situations. We will see if we can get them over the line."

Another striker, to go with the arrival of Lucca, is on Forest's shopping list.

They have shown an interest in Crystal Palace's Jean-Philippe Mateta, but are likely to lose out to AC Milan.

A full-back is also required, while strengthening in midfield is a possibility and the Reds have been eyeing up a goalkeeper. Dyche (above) is keen to bring in players with Premier League experience as his team continue to battle for survival.

However, he knows he faces a balancing act when it comes to managing a bolstered squad.

Loanees Arnaud Kalimuendo and Douglas Luiz have already left, and other fringe players could follow.

"If you can add experience, that's helpful, because I've got a lot of young players in there – not necessarily young in age but in their learning about the Premier League," said Dyche ahead of tomorrow's clash with Palace at the City Ground.

STAYING POWER Glasner persuaded Mateta not to move in the summer but Milan now want him

OLI'S FEAR IS CRYSTAL CLEAR

'We can't sell Mateta with no replacement'

NOTT'M FOREST v C PALACE
Premier League: Tomorrow 2pm

BY **NEIL McLEMAN**

CRYSTAL PALACE last night confirmed the loan signing of Evan Guessand from Aston Villa to pave the way for Jean Philippe-Mateta's sale to AC Milan.

Oliver Glasner had earlier warned Palace to avoid the nightmare scenario of letting Mateta go without signing another striker.

The France star has been left out of the squad to face Nottingham Forest tomorrow as he negotiates a transfer to AC Milan.

The FA Cup holders have also been in talks to sign Jorgen Strand Larsen from Wolves, while Guessand joins on loan until the end of the season with Palace holding an option to buy him in the summer.

Guessand, who joined Aston Villa in the summer from Nice for £30million and has scored just two goals in 21 appearances, is relishing the prospect of swapping a title charge for a potential relegation battle.

He said: "I'm really, really excited. I was waiting for this moment for a very long time, and I'm excited to play with my new teammates.

"With the quality we have, we can achieve something."

Palace have gone 11 games without a win in all competitions to slip eight points off the drop zone after selling captain Marc Guehi.

Glasner, who will leave in the summer, was adamant yesterday that Palace could not afford to let Mateta go without finding an adequate replacement.

He said: "As soon as we agree to sell JP and we can't sign one, this is a possibility, but then we all would be really disappointed.

"The club is working almost 24 hours a day right now because Marc left two weeks ago. As you can imagine it's not so easy to get the players at the end of January."

England midfielder Adam Wharton will be suspended at the City Ground while top scorer Mateta is "not in the right place to play" after Forest made an offer for him earlier in the week.

The Palace boss explained: "It is nothing to do with the transfer. It makes no sense to play him. I have to protect him and the team that is why he won't travel to Nottingham.

"There's so much noise, and again, so much speculation, so many things going on and we need every single player at his best and JP isn't at his best right now and that's why we decided that it's better not to play him."

Serie A side Milan are trying to offload former Chelsea striker Christopher Nkunku to be able to sign Mateta. He is out of contract in the summer of 2027.

But Glasner revealed he persuaded Mateta not to leave last summer - and still hopes he will stay and earn a place

MIDDLESBROUGH v NORWICH

Championship: KO 3pm

CONWAY: I'M STRONG ENOUGH...

TOMMY CONWAY won't give up his place without a fight as Middlesbrough close in on £10million Adam Armstrong.

Boro are keen on the Southampton striker to provide the final piece in their promotion jigsaw, as they bid to end a nine-year Premier League exile.

Conway went 24 games without a goal from open play earlier in the campaign, but has hit form with three in the last two, to take his season's tally to six.

Kim Hellberg's second-place side are aiming for a fifth straight league win at home to Norwich and the Scotland star (above) said: "I don't want to be in the Championship, I want to be in the Premier League, and I'm working my socks off to try to get to where we want to be.

"That might mean I score, I assist – as long as Middlesbrough win, for me that's everything. To get us to where we want to get to, we've got to win games, in any way, shape or form.

"Everyone believes, it's about keeping our feet on the ground and not thinking too far ahead."

Norwich have pulled four points clear of danger on the back of three straight wins, but Philippe Clement wants more than just Championship survival.

The Canaries head coach said: "I hope this creates for everybody more hunger and more belief. I have the ambition to go to the Premier League with this club."

LEICESTER v CHARLTON

Championship: KO 12.30pm

COAD RED FOR JONES' ADDICKS

NATHAN JONEs is ready to go on a Fox hunt to make up for being mauled by the Lions last week.

The Charlton boss has demanded a big reaction after the four-goal derby humiliation at Millwall that plunged the Addicks into relegation trouble.

Jones' men have won just two of the last 15 games to leave them three points above the drop zone ahead of the trip to managerless Leicester.

Veteran defender Conor Coady is in line for a debut after joining on loan from Wrexham, and the Charlton boss (above) said: "We have to react to that last result. We've had some tough days and last Saturday was tough for different reasons.

"We now have 18 games left and this is where we want to build some momentum. We're coming up against top sides week-in, week-out, and we relish that challenge.

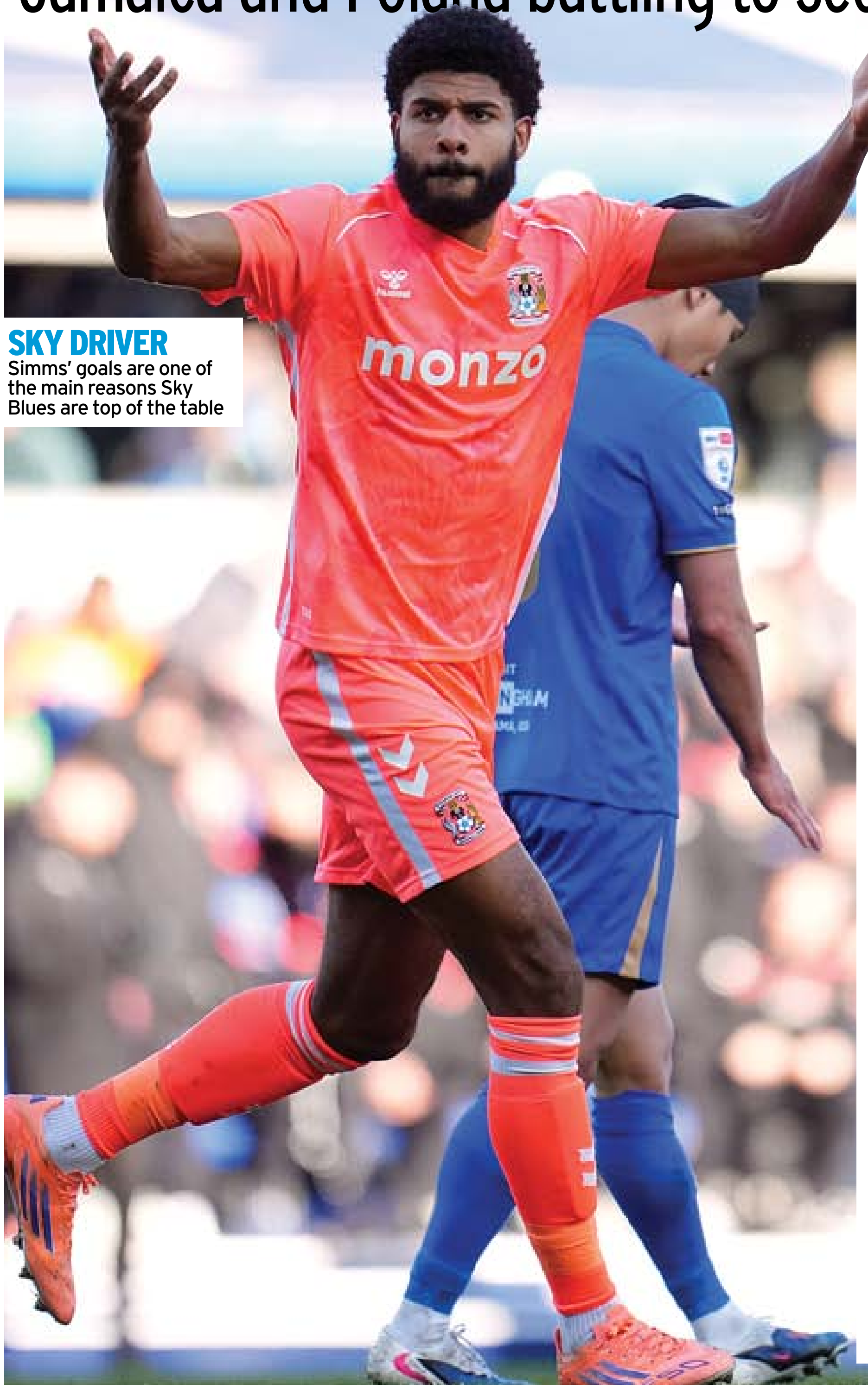
"We've signed Conor as a short-term fix, in terms of bringing that leadership quality to the football club. We're really happy because we need that."

Jones admitted the gamble on Onel Hernandez backfired after the injury-prone striker was shown the door after just two starts in four months. He added: "We took a free agent who hasn't played or trained at the intensity that we do."

Andy King is among the favourites to succeed Marti Cifuentes after City's first-team coach took charge as interim boss.

ELL OF A CHOICE

Jamaica and Poland battling to secure Cov hotshot Simms



SKY DRIVER
Simms' goals are one of the main reasons Sky Blues are top of the table

QPR v COVENTRY

Championship: KO 3pm

BY **JASON MELLOR**

WANTED-MAN Ellis Simms is keen to put Coventry in pole position for the Premier League before deciding his international future.

Jamaica and Poland are vying to persuade the Sky Blues' joint-top scorer to pledge his allegiance as the race to land the in-demand striker hots up.

An England Under-20, Simms qualifies for both of the other countries – and even had a Polish YouTuber fly over to publicise his nation's bid to secure the services of the former Everton trainee.

But the Oldham-born 25-year-old is happy to concentrate on firing Frank Lampard's men back into the top flight, after a quarter-of-a-century exile, and he said: "As of now, there's nothing officially decided.

"A journalist came to speak to me after the Millwall game and I listened to what he had to say. Now it's about concentrating on club football then, maybe, at a different time, I'll decide. I'm happy I've been scoring recently and I need to keep it up."

Coventry travel to QPR looking to halt a worrying mid-season wobble that's seen their lead slashed to three points as Middlesbrough and Ipswich eye the summit.

Lampard's table-toppers hammered the Hoops 7-1 at the start of the campaign, but head to the capital without a victory on the road in seven games.

It's also two wins from the last six in the league and 11-goal striker Simms said: "We were a bit down after Monday's defeat to Norwich, but have a chance to put things right on Saturday.

"There are a lot of tough teams who are playing well, so we knew it wasn't going to be easy, and now we need to keep going. We stay focused and level-headed, because it was never going to be smooth sailing throughout the season.

"We were prepared for ups and downs.

"We believe in ourselves. We're all ambitious and want to better ourselves. There's still a lot of games to play and we're looking forward to putting things right.

"Saturday is going to be a completely different game to the one at our place. They're a different team and it's going to be a massive test."

Boss Julien Stephan played-down talk of a Loftus Road revenge mission for QPR, who are without suspended defender Amadou Mbengue.

Mid-table Hoops responded to their CBS Arena humiliation by embarking on a six-game unbeaten run back in August, and the Frenchman said: "We showed great character after that, in terms of our mentality and personality, so let's see what happens on Saturday.

"Even though we're at home, we go into the match as the outsiders because Coventry are the best team in the league.

"We have to trust our ability to create something against them."

BLACKBURN v HULL

Championship: KO 3pm

JAKIROVIC HAMSTRUNG BY BIG INJURY LIST

LIFE'S a pitch for Sergej Jakirovic and his injury-hit Hull City squad.

Matt Crooks is the latest addition to the lengthy casualty list after the forward was ruled out for at least a month with a hamstring injury.

Jakirovic has been tearing his hair out at his enforced absences, and reckons the situation could get worse thanks to the hectic schedule on heavy pitches. The Tigers face six matches in league and cup next month as they bid to maintain their Championship promotion push.

City go in search of a fourth straight away win at struggling Blackburn Rovers, and boss Jakirovic said: "Crooks will be out for four weeks so, by the end of February, he will join us again.

"What can we do? I can't expect more because it's a lot of games and it's very demanding on the pitches."

New arrivals Paddy McNair and Lewis Koumas are in line to make their City debut at Ewood Park, but fellow recent signing Toby Collyer is nursing a calf problem.

Full-back Ryan Giles remains sidelined and Jakirovic is also without Semi Ajayi, Cody Drameh, Mo Belloumi, Darko Gyabi and Eliot Matazo.

Rovers defender Ryan Alebiosu is back in action after a horror shin injury that cut short his AFCON campaign with Nigeria.

The 24-year-old former Arsenal full-back revealed: "It was a high challenge and I had a deep cut on my shin.

"My leg was numb, you could see my bone, and I had to go to the hospital.

"The doctor said it was lucky no bones or tendons were damaged."

EXIT CALL GAVE ME THE BLUES

After brutal City dismissal, Keshi is battling back with Pompey

HEAD START
Anderson made his debut for Portsmouth in last week's derby with Saints

PORTSMOUTH v WEST BROM

Championship: KO 3pm

KESHI ANDERSON has lifted the lid on his "brutal" Birmingham exit.

The well-travelled winger insists all his efforts are going into helping keep his new club Portsmouth in the Championship after claiming it would be "criminal" if they went down.

Anderson was a key member of the record-breaking Blues side that romped to last season's League One title – but his two-and-a-half-year St Andrew's stint was ended by a shock phone call when he was told his City days were over. The 30-year-old made just eight starts this season for Chris Davies' (above) side and he revealed: "It was a 30-second phone call – it sometimes happens in football, it can be a brutal sport. To end in the way it did wasn't nice, but I wished the boys all the best."

Anderson came off the bench in the stormy south-coast derby draw against Southampton last Sunday, and is pushing to make his first Pompey start in the relegation six-pointer at home to West Brom.

John Mousinho's injury-ravaged side are a point above the drop zone, but can leapfrog the Baggies with a win, as they look to make it four games unbeaten in the league.

Anderson insisted: "We will stay up. With the team we have, it would be criminal not to. We've got the quality and we've got the fight.

"The main thing is keeping everyone fit and healthy because the squad is very good and we can definitely improve on the league position from last year.

"Last year they finished 16th, this year the aim is to do better, finish higher and progress.

"There were a few options when I left Birmingham, but Portsmouth was the one that was first in my head because the gaffer made it very apparent how much he wanted me.

"Coming into a team where you know you have that kind of love and respect, and being wanted, makes it so much easier to make that decision.

"We've had two good draws in our last two games that we'd have liked to have been victories.

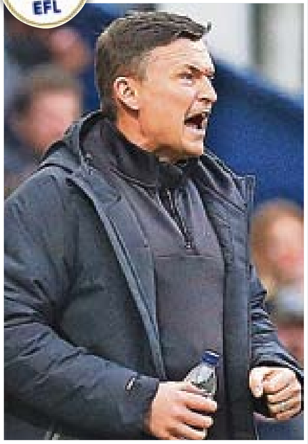
"We're searching for that win and we're hungry for it to get that momentum going, and go two, three, four in a row – that's what you need in the Championship – to put runs together."

Albion could end the day in the bottom three if they don't stop the rot after six defeats in eight matches.

Midfielder Jayson Molumby said: "It's getting to the stage where we all need to look at ourselves, ask ourselves questions and demand more from our team-mates."

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND-UP

TOWN ARE STILL HECK'S TOP TIP



PAUL HECKINGBOTTOM isn't about to change his mind after tipping IPSWICH TOWN for the title at the start of the season.

PRESTON beat the Tractor Boys in August, but trail Kieran McKenna's third-place side by seven points as they look to snap a four-game losing streak at Portman Road.

North End haven't scored for almost six-and-a-half hours, and boss Heckingbottom (left) said: "Ipswich were the team I said would win the league and they still might because they've continued to recruit. They are playing really well, it's going to be a good test."

SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY start life without Barry Bannan at home to WREXHAM. The Scottish midfielder could make his MILLWALL debut against Owls' local rivals SHEFFIELD UNITED.

SOUTHAMPTON hope to halt a six-game winless away streak in the league when they visit play-off-chasing STOKE.

BIRMINGHAM boss Chris Davies is in the market for a defender before the window closes. Ahead of the trip to OXFORD, he said: "We've got along with two centre-backs, but you need four."

SWANSEA'S Swedish winger Zeidane Inoussa misses the visit to WATFORD after being ruled out for the rest of the season with a stress fracture in his back.

LEAGUE ONE ROUND-UP

NO HURRY TO GET SALECH FIT

CARDIFF boss Brian Barry-Murphy won't rush 12-goal top-scorer Yousef Salech back for the trip to BURTON.

The 24-year-old Danish striker (above) sat out the midweek win against Barnsley after suffering a neck injury in the draw with Stockport.

The Bluebirds are four points clear at the top and Barry-Murphy said: "After such a serious injury, we're going to be patient and make sure he's in a really good place before coming back.

"We need to try and not rush him in our desperation to get him back."

LINCOLN are bidding to keep the heat on the leaders with a 12th league game unbeaten at WIGAN. Under-fire Latics boss Ryan Lowe said: "We're a point or two away from the relegation zone and we don't want to drop into it.

"I've got absolutely no question I can turn things around. I like to prove people wrong – I've had to do that all my life, all my career. You see managers getting sacked after three months but this is a long-term project."

Pressure is mounting on Jack Wilshere as LUTON look for a first win in five at home to BLACKPOOL. The Hatters boss said: "The fans have every right to be angry at me. It's a must to bounce back on Saturday with three points."

BRADFORD hope to snap a three-game losing streak at home to DONCASTER – who have won the last four meetings between the Yorkshire rivals.

LEAGUE ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cardiff	28	18	5	5	50	27	59
Lincoln City	28	16	7	5	47	29	55
Bolton	29	13	10	6	37	27	49
Stockport Cty	28	14	7	7	40	34	49
Bradford	27	13	7	7	35	31	46
Huddersfield	29	13	6	10	48	38	45
Stevenage	27	11	9	7	29	24	42
Wycombe	28	10	9	9	36	31	39
Luton	28	11	6	11	37	34	39
Peterborough	28	12	2	14	35	36	38
Exeter	27	11	4	12	33	26	37
Mansfield	26	10	7	9	36	30	37
Reading	27	9	10	8	37	35	37
Plymouth	28	11	4	13	35	40	37
Barnsley	24	9	6	9	37	40	33
Blackpool	28	9	5	14	35	41	32
AFC Wimbledn	26	9	5	12	28	35	32
Leyton Orient	28	9	5	14	40	48	32
Wigan	27	7	10	10	29	33	31
Burton Albion	27	8	6	13	28	39	30
Doncaster	27	8	6	13	31	44	30
Northampton	27	8	5	14	24	34	29
Rotherham	27	7	7	13	27	40	28
Port Vale	25	4	6	15	19	37	18

LEAGUE TWO ROUND-UP

LEE WOULD LOV FOREST DERBY

NOTTS COUNTY signing Lee Ndlovu has set his sights on a Nottingham derby after joining the Magpies from Barnet.

The striker (above), 31, admits he had a change of heart after turning down a move to Meadow Lane in August.

Ahead of the trip to FLEETWOOD, he said: "It wasn't the right time then, but this time around it's worked out. Nottingham Forest is close-by and hopefully one day we will be playing against them."

"Relentless" GILLINGHAM reckon Ronan Hale is worth all the trouble.

The Gills finally landed the Ross County striker with a third improved bid for the Northern Ireland man, who has scored 30 goals in the last 18 months north of the border.

County chief executive Steven Ferguson said: "We didn't want to lose him but Gillingham were relentless.

"He put his cards on the table and said the move was something he would like."

Ahead of the visit by leaders BROMLEY, Hale, 27, said: "This is the place I want to be playing my football and I can't wait to get started."

Former Brackley boss Gavin Cowan takes charge of his first game for SHREWSBURY at home to BARNET, after the third-bottom Shrews axed Michael Appleton following one league win in 11.

HARROGATE are looking for a first league win in 19 games, stretching back to September, as they travel to fellow strugglers CRAWLEY.

LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bromley	28	16	8	4	48	30	56
MK Dons	28	14	8	6	54	29	50
Cambridge	27	14	8	5	35	22	50
Salford City	27	15	4	8	39	34	49
Notts County	27	14	6	7	41	28	48
Walsall	27	14	6	7	35	24	48
Swindon	27	14	4	9	43	33	46
Chesterfield	28	11	11	6	44	37	44
Grimsby	27	12	7	8	39	30	43
Colchester	27	11	9	7	41	30	42
Barnet	27	11	8	8	36	29	41
Crewe	28	11	7	10	44	37	40
Gillingham	26	9	11	6	37	30	38
Accrington	27	10	7	10	31	29	37
Fleetwood	27	10	7	10	36	35	37
Oldham	26	8	11	7	28	23	35
Tranmere	28	8	8	12	42	47	32
Cheltenham	27	9	3	15	26	45	30
Barrow	26	6	6	14	27	39	24
Crawley Town	28	5	8	15	30	47	23
Shrewsbury	27	5	7	15	23	47	22
Bristol Rovers	27	6	3	18	21	47	21
Newport Cty	27	5	5	17	29	51	20
Harrogate Tn	28	4	6	18	20	46	18

YOUR WEEKEND GUIDE TO THE PREM

THE BIG MATCH

TOTTENHAM v MAN CITY

Tomorrow 4.30pm, Sky Sports

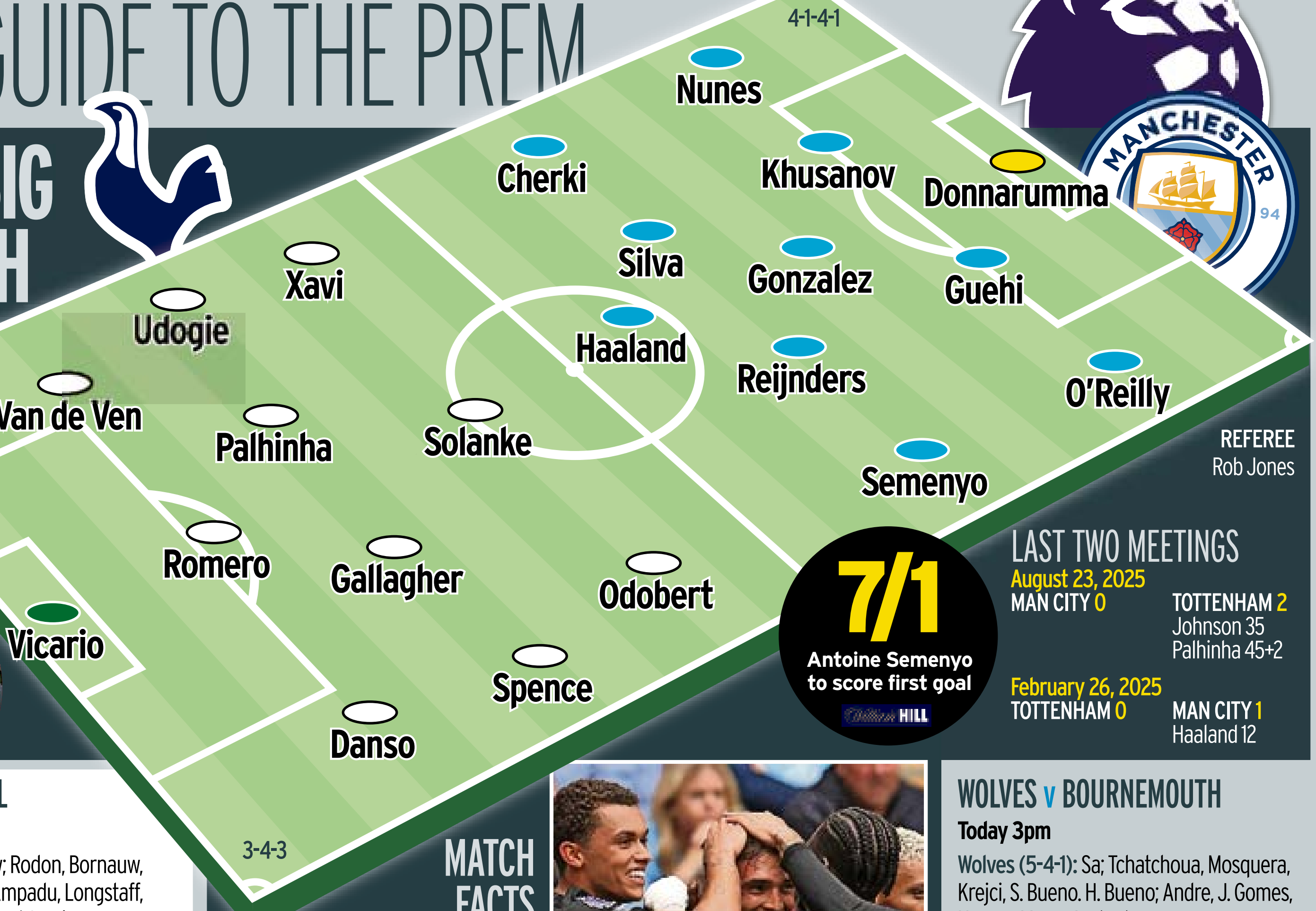
BY **ALASDAIR GOLD**

THOMAS FRANK has not ruled out a loan signing to bolster their injury-ravaged squad before the transfer window closes on Monday.

Tottenham are dealing with eight long-term injuries and Frank (below) has admitted his squad is weaker now than when the window opened.

"We're still in the market, but it's just that the short term also needs to be with a long-term view," he said.

"[A loan] that's different, doing a loan that fits and can help us. That's different compared to buying a player for £30-£40million, that does he really improve us much more to what we've got now? That's two different things."



REFEREE
Rob Jones

7/1
Antoine Semenyo to score first goal

LAST TWO MEETINGS

August 23, 2025
MAN CITY 0 — TOTTENHAM 2
Johnson 35
Palhinha 45+2

February 26, 2025
TOTTENHAM 0 — MAN CITY 1
Haaland 12

MATCH FACTS

2 Manchester City have won their last two away league games against Tottenham

5 Tottenham Hotspur are winless in five Premier League matches (D3 L2)

8 Pep Guardiola has lost more league games against Spurs than any other opponent

BRIGHTON v EVERTON

Today 3pm

Brighton (4-3-3): Verbruggen; Veltman, van Hecke, Dunk, Kadioglu; Baleba, Ayari, Gross; Minteh, Welbeck, Mitoma

Everton (4-2-3-1): Pickford; Mykolenko, O'Brien, Tarkowski, Patterson; Garner, Gueye; Ndiaye, Dewsbury-Hall, Dibling; Barry

Referee: Chris Kavanagh

5 Brighton are winless in their last five home league games against Everton (D2 L3)

Draw: 5/2

LEEDS v ARSENAL

Today 3pm

Leeds (3-5-2): Darlow; Rodon, Bornauw, Struijk; Bogle, Stach, Ampadu, Longstaff, Justin; Aaronson, Calvert-Lewin

Arsenal (4-3-3): Raya; Timber, Saliba, Gabriel, Calafiori; Zubimendi, Rice, Odegaard; Saka, Gyokeres, Trossard

Referee: Stuart Attwell

6 Arsenal have won their last six league games against Leeds by an aggregate score of 20-5

Leeds to win: 9/2

WOLVES v BOURNEMOUTH

Today 3pm

Wolves (5-4-1): Sa; Tchatchoua, Mosquera, Krejci, S. Bueno. H. Bueno; Andre, J. Gomes, Hwang, Mane; Arokodare

Bournemouth (4-2-3-1): Petrovic; Smith, Hill, Senesi, Truffert; Scott, Cook; Adli, Kroupi, Jimenez; Evanilson

Referee: Michael Oliver

2 Bournemouth have lost two of the last 19 Prem games against sides in the relegation zone (W13 D4)

Wolves to win: 19/10

CHELSEA v WEST HAM

Today 5.30pm, Sky Sports

Chelsea (4-2-3-1): Sanchez; Gusto, Chalobah, Acheampong, Hato; Santos, Caicedo; Neto, Palmer, Gittens; Delap

West Ham (4-2-3-1): Areola; Wan-Bissaka, Todibo, Mavropanos, Scares; Soucek, Fernandes; Bowen, Pablo, Summerville; Castellanos

Referee: Anthony Taylor

1 West Ham have won just one of their last 19 Premier League away games against Chelsea (D4 L14)

Draw: 10/3

LIVERPOOL v NEWCASTLE

Today 8pm, TNT Sports

Liverpool (4-2-3-1): Alisson; Szoboszlai, Konate, Van Djik, Kerkez; Mac Allister, Gravenberch; Salah, Wirtz, Gakpo; Ekitike

Newcastle (4-3-3): Pope; Trippier, Thiaw, Botman, Hall; Miley, Tonali, Guimaraes; Elanga, Wissa, Gordon

Referee: Simon Hooper

18 Liverpool are unbeaten in their last 18 Premier games against Newcastle (W13 D5)

Liverpool to win: 4/5

ASTON VILLA v BRENTFORD

Tomorrow 2pm, Sky Sports

Aston Villa (4-5-1): Martinez; Cash, Konsa, Torres, Maatsen; Onana, Luiz, Sancho, Rogers, Buendia; Abraham

Brentford (4-2-3-1): Kelleher; Kayode, van den Berg, Collins, Henry; Henderson, Janelt; Jensen, Damsgaard, Schade; Igor Thiago

Referee: Tim Robinson

10 Aston Villa have never lost in 10 previous home league games against Brentford (W4 D6)

Draw: 12/5

MANCHESTER UNITED v FULHAM

Tomorrow 2pm, Sky Sports

Manchester United (4-2-3-1) Lammens; Dalot, Maguire, Martinez, Shaw; Casemiro, Mainoo; Amad, Fernandes, Cunha; Mbeumo

Fulham (4-2-3-1): Leno; Castagne, Andersen, Cuenca, Robinson; Iwobi, Berge; Wilson, Smith-Rowe, Kevin; Jimenez

Referee: John Brooks

20 Man United have lost just one of their last 20 Premier League games against Fulham (W15 D4)

Fulham to win: 19/5

N FOREST v CRYSTAL PALACE

Tomorrow 2pm, Sky Sports

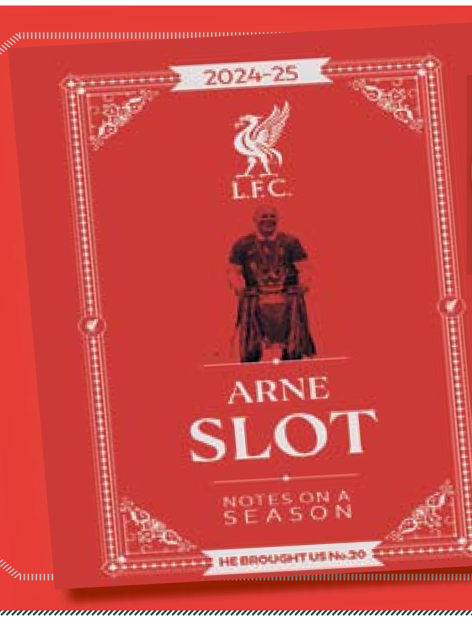
N Forest (4-2-3-1): Sels; Aina, Milenkovic, Murillo, Williams; Anderson, Sangare; Hudson-Odoi, Gibbs-White, Dominguez; Igor Jesus

Crystal Palace (3-4-3): Henderson; Riad, Lacroix, Richards; Munoz, Lerma, Hughes, Mitchell; Pino, Johnson, Sarr.

Referee: Michael Salisbury

6 Forest are unbeaten in their last six top-flight home games against Crystal Palace

Forest to win: 19/20



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